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Slowdown in final quarter of 2018 may set tone for this year

Singapore faces sharp external headwinds, may bank on domestic drivers for growth

Ng Jun Sen
Business Correspondent

A year marked by global protectionist tensions ended on a sluggish note for the Singapore economy, which grew by 1.9 per cent year on year in the final quarter of 2018 – the weakest quarter of growth in three years.

This was lower than the 2.4 per cent growth in the previous quarter and came in under the Government's own flash estimate of a 2.2 per cent expansion.

With several key economies turning in bleaker forecasts for this year, experts expect muted growth in 2019.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) is maintaining its forecast range of 1.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent for the year ahead, but now expects growth to come in below the mid-point.

MTI said the economy grew 3.2 per cent for all of last year, slowing from 3.9 per cent in 2017.

MTI permanent secretary Loh Khum Yean said the external demand outlook has weakened slightly since November, with the United States, China and the euro zone economies forecasting moderate growth this year.

At the same time, there is now

the added threat of a sharper-than-expected slowdown in China and a worsening of its trade conflict with the US dragging down Singapore's economy.

A no-deal Brexit, in which Britain exits the European Union without a withdrawal agreement, has reappeared as a downside risk for the first time since the 2016 referendum. "There is uncertainty because negotiations are dragging on, and there is no clarity. This could potentially introduce trade frictions between the UK and its trading partners," said Mr Loh, adding that Britain is an important trading partner of Singapore.

Should the downside risks materialise, investor sentiments may take a hit, he said.

Meanwhile, after two years of strong growth, the manufacturing sector is also likely to slow down significantly, said MTI, as the global demand for semiconductors weakens.

Manufacturing grew 5.1 per cent year on year in the fourth quarter compared with 3.5 per cent growth in the preceding quarter.

But there are bright spots for Singapore. Domestic demand may remain strong, with the labour market supporting private consumption, said the chief economist of the Monetary Authority of Singapore

Edward Robinson.

The construction industry is also likely to see a turnaround, said MTI, holding out hope for a sector that has been shrinking for three consecutive years.

The 1 per cent shrinkage that the construction sector recorded in the fourth quarter of last year marked an improvement over the 2.3 per cent contraction it recorded in the previous quarter.

The spate of building contracts awarded in the second half of 2016 will start to boost the sector's performance this year, said UOB economist Barnabas Gan.

HSBC economist Chen Jingyuan said while it was a surprise to see the earlier flash figures revised downwards, she noted the optimism towards domestically oriented service sectors such as infocomms, education and health. Infocomms expanded 6.1 per cent in the final three months of last year, surpassing the 5.4 per cent growth in the preceding quarter. She said: "All things considered, growth momentum is slowing in Singapore."

UOB's Mr Gan said: "The negative spillover effects of any external factors can pose significant risk. After all, Singapore does not have a relatively strong domestic economy. We are an export-dependent economy and a price taker."

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SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A6

Fun and fantasy at Chingay parade



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Mrs Lee stood atop a butterfly-themed float on the first night of the two-day Chingay parade at the F1 Pit Building yesterday, as they joined in the festivities. The theme for this year's edition of the annual street parade organised by the People's Association is Dreams Fantasia (Bicentennial Edition). More than 6,500 performers from over 50 local and international contingents are taking part. Also on the float was People's Association deputy chairman Chan Chun Sing, who is also Minister for Trade and Industry. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG SEE HOME B8

Plans to make commutes safer, faster

Bring jobs closer to homes and re-design roads in housing estates to get vehicles to slow down – these were among proposals by the Land Transport Master Plan Advisory Panel to make journeys faster, safer and more inclusive.

The 15-member panel, chaired by Senior Minister of State for Transport Janil Puthucheary, also suggested that by 2040, peak-hour commutes on public transport

should take no more than 45 minutes, which will help the average peak-hour commuter save about 15 minutes a day.

In a Facebook post, Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan said his ministry will study the recommendations carefully, and he will respond to them at next month's Budget debate in Parliament.

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A8

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10 must-reads for today

1 India blames Pakistan

India has accused Pakistan of having a "direct hand" in a deadly terror attack in Kashmir that left over 40 soldiers dead, warning of stern action that includes working towards the diplomatic isolation of Pakistan. However, Pakistan has denied it played any role in the attack, even as the United States noted that the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammad terror group had claimed responsibility for the bombing. **WORLD A16**



Women praying in front of a portrait of Central Reserve Police Force officer Bablu Santra, who was killed in the Kashmir terror attack. PHOTO: REUTERS

2 Slower growth in Q4

The Singapore economy grew by 1.9 per cent year on year in the final quarter of last year, a slower rate than the 2.4 per cent growth in the previous quarter. For the full year, it grew by 3.2 per cent year on year, down from 3.9 per cent in the whole of 2017. The Ministry of Trade and Industry maintained its 2019 forecast range of 1.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent. **TOP OF THE NEWS A1**

3 Earlier entry into poly

Those with A-level certificates who want to go on to a polytechnic for further studies can now apply for course exemptions. If successful, they can start their diploma studies in the second semester in October and shave six months off three-year programmes. **TOP OF THE NEWS A4**

4 More Democrats join race

The increasingly crowded field of Democrats seeking to contest the 2020 United States presidential election is partly fuelled by US President Donald Trump's success, with many in the party rationalising that if the billionaire political outsider could be elected, anybody could win. **WORLD A26**

5 Taking feedback seriously

Public responses to incidents such as the recent national service training deaths and the SingHealth cyber attack are a valuable source of feedback, and it is important for policymakers to learn to process and respond better to such views, says Behavioural Sciences Institute director David Chan. **OPINION A30**

6 Job help for women

The labour movement will work with employers and the Government to find ways to get more middle-aged women to join the workforce. Many of these women said in a survey last year that they do not look for work because of caregiving duties. **HOME B1**

7 NTU looks beyond grades

Applicants to 40 Nanyang Technological University undergraduate courses can improve their chances of getting a place through interviews, aptitude tests and portfolios. The programmes include those in engineering, science, and the humanities and social sciences. **HOME B2**

8 Newstead winding up

Home-grown electronics retailer Newstead Technologies is winding up its business after 19 years amid accumulated debts of more than \$60 million, The Straits Times has learnt. Its debt mountain includes about \$4.7 million owed to Apple South Asia. **BUSINESS C1**

9 Ex-fencer is Games chief

In a continuation of the growing trend of having younger officials lead Team Singapore at major Games, former national fencer Juliana Seow, 46, will be chef de mission for the Nov 30-Dec 11 SEA Games in the Philippines. Former national sailor Chung Pei Ming, 36, and former national bowler Valerie Teo, 34, will assist her. **SPORT C16**

10 Singer under sex probe

Singer-songwriter Ryan Adams (below) is reportedly being probed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation over whether he engaged in sexually explicit communication with an underage fan. The New York Times reported that a woman said her online contact with Adams, 44, began when she was 14 and continued until she was 16. **LIFE D10**



PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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WEBSPECIAL

Guide to Budget jargon

Do you know the difference between TDSR and ABSD? And what the PIC scheme is? If you are confused by finance-related acronyms and terms, here is a guide to tackling Budget jargon. <http://str.sg/budgetA-Z>



VIDEO

Food aphrodisiacs

Aside from setting the mood with candlelight and romantic music on Valentine's Day, some turn to natural food aphrodisiacs to turn up the heat. But do they really work? We put some to the test. <http://str.sg/passion-food>

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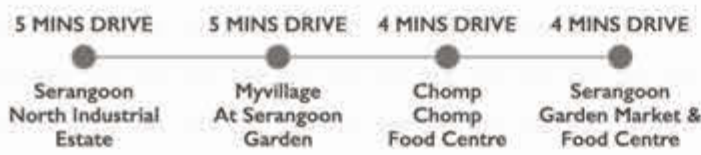


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2 S'poreans, including one who financed ISIS fighter, detained

Man aided top Malaysian ISIS fighter in Syria, influenced other detained S'porean

Zakir Hussain
News Editor

Two radicalised Singaporeans, one of whom was based in Johor and helped finance the top Malaysian ISIS fighter in Syria, have been detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said yesterday that businessman Mohamed Kazali Salleh, 48, and his Singapore-based friend Hazim Syahmi Mahfoot, 28, a freelance car exporter, were issued detention orders last month.

The Royal Malaysian Police (RMP) also announced yesterday that they had arrested Kazali and five other individuals in operations in Johor, Selangor and Sabah in the past two months for involvement in militant groups.

News of the arrests came in the wake of ISIS' caliphate being dismantled, with several hundred mostly foreign fighters making their last stand to defend an area under 1 sq km near Syria's border with Iraq.

But the regional security authorities are concerned that the extremist ideology which fuelled the group remains active and will spread as fighters return and export their battles, including through social media.

In Kazali's case, he had funded and been in active contact with Syria-based ISIS militant Wan Mohd Aquil Wan Zainal Abidin, also known as Akel Zainal, MHA said. Akel, who was a member of 1990s Malaysian rock band Ukays, had instructed two Malaysian ISIS supporters to attack places of worship and police stations in Malaysia early this year. The plots were foiled when the supporters were arrested last November.

In December, Akel instructed Kazali to attack a Freemasons centre in Johor Baru but Kazali did not follow through as he was afraid of being caught, MHA said.

The RMP, whose Special Branch cooperated closely with Singapore's Internal Security Department (ISD) in the investigation, said Kazali was arrested in Johor Baru on Dec 19. He was deported and handed over to ISD on Jan 7 after being interrogated in Malaysia.

Kazali moved to Malaysia with his family when he was a child, and had been working in Johor

Baru over the past decade.

Giving an account of his involvement with terror, the ministry said Kazali first met Akel in 2009 and became strongly influenced by Akel's radical views and conspiracy theories. He was convinced by Akel's belief that Muslims are duty-bound to travel to Syria to fight. So, when Akel decided to go there in late 2013, Kazali gave him financial assistance for the trip.

"His material assistance to Akel continued when Akel was in Syria, and in turn, Akel had kept him updated on his exploits on the battlefield," MHA said. "Kazali believed that the help he gave to Akel would guarantee him a place in paradise should Akel achieve martyrdom in Syria."

As Kazali became increasingly radicalised, he saw ISIS fighters as "righteous" individuals defending Muslims. At Akel's urging, he took a *bai'ah*, or pledge of allegiance, to ISIS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, which was conveyed to Akel via social media, MHA said.

He also agreed to join Akel in Syria, but did not act as he was not ready to leave his life in Malaysia behind, the ministry added.

Instead, he took to sharing news of Akel's terrorism-related activities on social media to inspire others to travel to Syria, and was prepared to facilitate such travel.

As for Hazim, MHA said he met Kazali in May last year in Singapore. They had business dealings, quickly developed a friendship, and Hazim was influenced by Kazali's radical outlook.

"Hazim looked up to Kazali and was convinced by Kazali that he should undertake armed violence against the perceived enemies of his religion, specifically non-Muslims. Hazim believed that all Muslims are duty-bound to travel to conflict zones such as Palestine, Syria and Myanmar to fight non-Muslims there," the ministry said.

It said Hazim even took a pledge to remain loyal and obedient to Kazali, even if it involved carrying out attacks and killing others.

MHA added: "These cases highlight the dangers of radicalisation of Singaporeans overseas and the potential impact within Singapore. The threat of extremism is one which does not respect national borders."

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Singaporean businessman Mohamed Kazali Salleh was arrested by the Malaysian police in Johor Baru for his involvement in terrorism-related activities. PHOTO: ROYAL MALAYSIAN POLICE SPECIAL BRANCH'S COUNTER TERRORISM DIVISION

KL nabs six suspected militants in raids

Nadiah H. Rodzi
Malaysia Correspondent
In Kuala Lumpur



Mohamed Kazali Salleh funded Malaysian militant Akel Zainal (above), who fought for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. PHOTO: FACEBOOK/PEJUANG MUDA MASAKINI

Six suspected militants, including a Singaporean businessman, have been arrested by the Malaysian police following a series of anti-terror raids across the country.

The men, aged 21 to 48, were nabbed in Johor, Selangor and Sabah between Dec 19 last year and Jan 28.

In the first swoop, a 48-year-old Singaporean was arrested in Johor Baru on Dec 19 with the help of Singapore's Internal Security Department. The Singapore authorities named him as Mohamed Kazali Salleh.

He funded a Malaysian militant of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Wan Mohd Aquil Wan Zainal Abidin, also known as Akel Zainal, and had been told to recruit militants for an attack in Johor Baru.

Also on Dec 19, a Bangladeshi cleaner, 31, was arrested in Selangor's Klang. He is believed to be an ISIS supporter and tasked with recruiting militants for the group.

The police detained two Malaysians, both 38, in Sepang on Jan 10.

Prior to their arrest, the duo – who worked as farm workers abroad – had been deported to Malaysia after the country they were in found that they had pledged their allegiance to ISIS.

"One of them even channelled funds to Malaysian militant Khairul Amizan Azmi, who is in Syria,"

Inspector-General of Police Mohamad Fuzi Harun said in a statement yesterday.

The police also nabbed a 21-year-old Filipino man on Jan 19 in Sabah. The authorities believe he is a member of the Abu Sayyaf militant group in the Philippines.

"The suspect was arrested in Kota Kinabalu and had snuck into the country in March last year. He has the expertise to operate an array of weapons, and he has connections to Abu Sayyaf leader Furiqi Indama," Tan Sri Fuzi said.

The Abu Sayyaf has pledged allegiance to ISIS. Since 2017, the Malaysian authorities have detained 39 Abu Sayyaf militants.

The last man arrested was a 26-year-old South Asian. He was caught in Puchong on Jan 28 for harbouring a fellow countryman who is listed on Interpol's Red Notice for his involvement in terrorist activities.

Since 2013, Malaysia has arrested more than 400 people for suspected links to terrorism. The Muslim-majority country faces threats from self-radicalised ISIS sympathisers at home and regional militant groups that seek funding and refuge in South-east Asia.

Malaysia was hit by a terrorist attack in June 2016, when two men on a motorcycle lobbed a grenade into a nightclub in Selangor, injuring eight people. The attackers were sentenced to 25 years in jail.

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Exemptions, earlier entry for A-level grads opting for poly

Sandra Davie
Senior Education
Correspondent

Students armed with an A-level certificate who want to further their studies at the polytechnic can apply for course exemptions, potentially shaving six months off three-year diploma programmes.

In announcing this yesterday, the Ministry of Education (MOE) said A-level students can apply for a place in August. If they secure a place and the exemption, they can start their diploma studies in the second semester in October.

Currently, most A-level graduates apply for and enrol in a polytechnic only one year after getting their A-level results in late February or early March.

This is because most polytechnic admission exercises would have closed by the time students receive their A-level results.

This year's results will be released next Friday.

A-level graduates who are

eligible for the one-semester exemption, and who are not enlisting in national service, will be able to enter the polytechnics in the same year that they receive their A-level results.

MOE said that about 200 A-level graduates take up diploma studies every year.

These students are usually keen to pursue an applied pathway at the polytechnics that matches their area of interest.

Giving further details on the course exemptions, MOE said they will be available for 110 out of the 230 courses at the five polytechnics.

While these requirements may differ for specific courses, they would have generally been covered in the A-level syllabus.

For example, A-level graduates taking up Ngee Ann Polytechnic's diploma in information technology may be exempted from the modules on computing mathematics and programming 1, if they have obtained passes in H2 computing or computing science and H2 mathematics.



The ministry assured school leavers that places for A-level graduates will be separately catered for, and there will be no impact on places available for O-level graduates or Institute of Technical Education graduates. Singapore Polytechnic student

Noorhana Ameera Norzaim, 19, enrolled last year in the diploma in chemical engineering programme after completing her A levels at Victoria Junior College.

She was not able to secure a place in a local university with her A-level results and was encour-

Ms Noorhana Ameera Norzaim enrolled in Singapore Polytechnic after her A levels. PHOTO: SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC

aged by her mother to enrol in the polytechnic.

Although she will not benefit from the changes being introduced this year, she said: "It makes sense to give exemptions to A-level graduates who have covered the same modules in their A-level syllabus."

"It will allow them to complete the course in a shorter time and go out to work or to university earlier." She said she enjoys the hands-on learning approach at the polytechnic and is active in Singapore Polytechnic's Malay Language Society as well as the hockey team.

Ms Noorhana hopes to do well enough to enrol later in the Singapore Institute of Technology's pharmaceutical engineering course.

Ms R. Sheena, 19, who is awaiting her A-level results, said it is good that she will not have to wait a year to apply for a place in a polytechnic.

"If I don't do well enough to get into mass communications in the university, then I will take the polytechnic route," she added.

"I am relieved to hear that I don't have to wait another year to apply to the poly if I am not accepted by the universities."

"With the exemptions and earlier entry in October, I get to save a whole year."

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PM Lee and SAF leaders take safety with utmost seriousness

Recent loss of lives painful, aim is to achieve zero fatalities, he says

Rachel Au-Yong
Political Correspondent

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong yesterday stressed that he and leaders of the Singapore Armed Forces take safety with the utmost seriousness, in his first public comment on recent SAF training deaths.

"The recent SAF incidents have been very painful because they cost precious lives. I know how heart-breaking this is to all of us, and especially the families," he said in a Facebook post yesterday, which was also Total Defence Day.

The emotional impact is greater

and the loss even harder when it happens to a well-known figure like actor Aloysius Pang, he noted.

Corporal First Class (NS) Pang's death last month, which triggered an outpouring of grief and outrage from the public, was the fourth training-related death since September 2017. The spate of deaths came after a period of zero deaths related to training and operations in the SAF between 2013 and 2016.

Following CFC Pang's death, the SAF rolled out measures to improve safety, including an unprecedented move to lower training tempo across all services and forming a new Inspector-General's Office that will have full authority to scrutinise and enforce safety practices at all levels.

PM Lee said the SAF has put "enormous emphasis on training safety", and aims to achieve zero fa-

talities. It also ensures the injured get the best medical care after every incident.

And the SAF grieves deeply when a soldier dies, PM Lee said.

"His comrades understand how his family feels because they feel the loss keenly too. But they try to put aside their emotions to take care of the bereaved family, and continue carrying out their SAF duties," he added.

He emphasised that the SAF will simultaneously investigate the incident and identify its causes, as well as improve processes and training.

"We know zero fatalities is extremely hard to achieve. But we will strive for it because every life is precious to us."

PM Lee, a former brigadier-general, said he spoke from personal experience. As a unit commander, he

was responsible for his men's training, safety and welfare. "In a way, I was standing in for their parents."

While serving on the General Staff later, he had to deal with training incidents, deciding what needed to be fixed and if anyone should be punished.

"I had to account to the bereaved families and think hard how to keep servicemen safe while still fulfilling the SAF's mission," he said.

As Prime Minister, he said, he has made sure the Ministry of Defence has capable leaders, and that "when a training accident happens, the Government answers, not only to the family, but also to all our NSmen and the public too".

"That is essential for the SAF and national service to retain public confidence and support," he added.

"I can therefore assure you that I

and the SAF leadership take safety with utmost seriousness. It was so when I was there, and I am confident it is even more so today."

He added: "In war, we will have to put servicemen in harm's way to defend the country; but in peacetime training, we owe it to our servicemen never to compromise their safety and endanger their lives."

PM Lee also said the SAF has to carry on training and fulfilling its operational duties as Singapore cannot outsource its security and defence to anyone else.

Thanking Singaporeans for supporting the SAF and national service, he said their support has helped build a strong and professional SAF, with well-equipped, well-trained and well-motivated soldiers. A strong and well-trained SAF is the reason Singapore enjoys peace and security, and can maintain friendly relations with other countries, he added.

"So, when something goes wrong, I hope you will see things in perspective," he said. "We must never gloss over shortcomings and failures. But neither should we forget the SAF's progress and achievements, and its contributions to Singapore's peace and security."

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Corporal First Class (NS) Aloysius Pang was doing repair works on a Singapore Self-Propelled Howitzer during a military exercise in New Zealand last month when he failed to get out of the way of the barrel as it was being lowered, resulting in injuries to his chest and abdomen that led to his death.



From left: United States Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer at a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Chinese officials at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. Both Mr Xi and Mr Lighthizer appeared optimistic in their assessment of the progress made during the talks, which are set to continue next week in the US capital. PHOTO: REUTERS

China-US trade talks to continue in Washington

Chong Koh Ping
China Correspondent
In Shanghai

Trade talks between the world's two largest economies will continue next week in Washington as both sides indicated progress in Beijing this week.

The Xinhua news agency said Chinese President Xi Jinping met US Trade Representative Robert Light-

hizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin yesterday at the Great Hall of the People, telling them that China was willing to resolve trade disputes with the United States through cooperation.

But such "cooperation has to be based on principles", the Chinese leader added. He noted the "important progress" in the talks in Beijing, and said he hoped the negotiators would "continue to work hard" to produce a mutually beneficial win-

win agreement next week.

Mr Lighthizer also appeared upbeat in his assessment of the talks. "We feel we have made headway on very, very important and difficult issues," he told the Associated Press. "We have additional work we have to do, but we are hopeful."

Xinhua said the US negotiators told Mr Xi they were willing to work with China to reach a deal that was in the interests of both countries.

Mr Mnuchin also tweeted yes-

terday saying that the talks had been "productive".

In Washington, a White House statement, which also affirmed progress had been made in the discussions, confirmed that both sides were working towards a memorandum of understanding that could be signed by US President Donald Trump and Mr Xi at a summit later.

The White House disclosed that the US had focused on "structural issues, including forced technology

transfer, intellectual property rights, cybertheft, agriculture, services, non-tariff barriers and currency" during the talks.

Both sides also discussed ways to reduce the "large and persistent" US trade deficit with China, it said.

The key sticking point in negotiations seems to be Washington's insistence on wide-ranging structural changes to China's trade and industrial policies as well as enforcement mechanisms to be included in any

trade deal. These are seen to be unacceptable by Beijing.

However, China is reported to be willing to end market-distorting subsidies to its state-owned enterprises as part of efforts to broker a deal. But US negotiators remain sceptical about such promises as China has never disclosed the amount of subsidies, and it will be hard to verify if they have indeed been withdrawn.

Time is running out for both sides to agree on even an interim deal to temporarily defuse trade tensions.

If no deal is reached by March 1, American tariffs on US\$200 billion (S\$272 billion) worth of Chinese goods will more than double from 10 per cent to 25 per cent.

Asian markets retreated yesterday as uncertainty grew about prospects for a deal by March 1. Shanghai lost 1.4 per cent, while Hong Kong was down 1.9 per cent. Tokyo closed 1.1 per cent lower, and Singapore dropped by 0.41 per cent.

Earlier, it was reported that Mr Trump was considering extending the deadline by 60 days if both sides were close to a deal.

However, on Thursday, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow refuted the report, saying that there has been no decision to extend the deadline for a deal.

Sentiment among Chinese media of a deal remained upbeat, judging by a series of tweets by Mr Hu Xijin, the chief editor of the Global Times, a newspaper run by the Chinese Communist Party. He tweeted: "After nearly one year of tough talks, I think the finishing line is nearly in sight."

"There is great possibility for China and the US reaching (a) final agreement," he added in a separate tweet.

Whatever the outcome, however, most analysts believe frictions between both countries are here to stay as their rivalry intensifies.

Beyond trade, technology is another contentious area.

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S'pore's trade, exports down overall

Ng Jun Sen
Business Correspondent

2018 trade performance

Singapore's trade and exports slowed down overall last year, though total merchandise trade grew 9.2 per cent year on year to hit a high of \$1.1 trillion, crossing the trillion-dollar milestone for the first time since 2014.

But the lofty figure masks the fact that global trade tensions and weakening demand for electronics weighed heavily from the second half of last year.

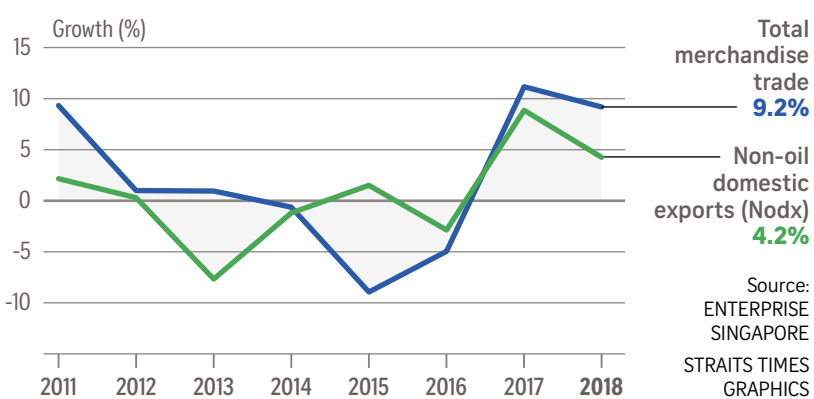
Non-oil domestic exports (Nodx) grew at a slower pace of 4.2 per cent last year, down from 8.8 per cent in 2017, yesterday's data by Enterprise Singapore showed.

But fourth-quarter data told a more immediate reality: Nodx declined by 1.1 per cent year on year from October to December, a far cry from the 8 per cent growth in the previous quarter.

This was also the only quarter of last year when Nodx slipped into negative territory.

Maybank Kim Eng economist Chua Hak Bin said the full-year export figures "were lifted by strong results in the first half of the year".

The period saw a 5.2 per cent year-on-year growth in total trade, against a 3.3 per cent increase in the second half of last year.



The tit-for-tat tariffs between the United States and China began in January last year, but economists say their effects kicked in only towards the end of the year.

Overall, the growth was driven by non-electronic exports, which outweighed the decline in electronics, said Enterprise Singapore.

Non-electronic Nodx rose by 8.2 per cent last year, slowing from a 9.2 per cent increase in 2017. Electronic Nodx fell 5.5 per cent last year, reversing the 8 per cent increase seen in the preceding year.

Non-oil exports to top markets such as the United States, the European Union, Japan and Indonesia

grew. But they fell to markets such as South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia.

Exports to China - Singapore's largest trading partner - shrank by 8.8 per cent from the previous year.

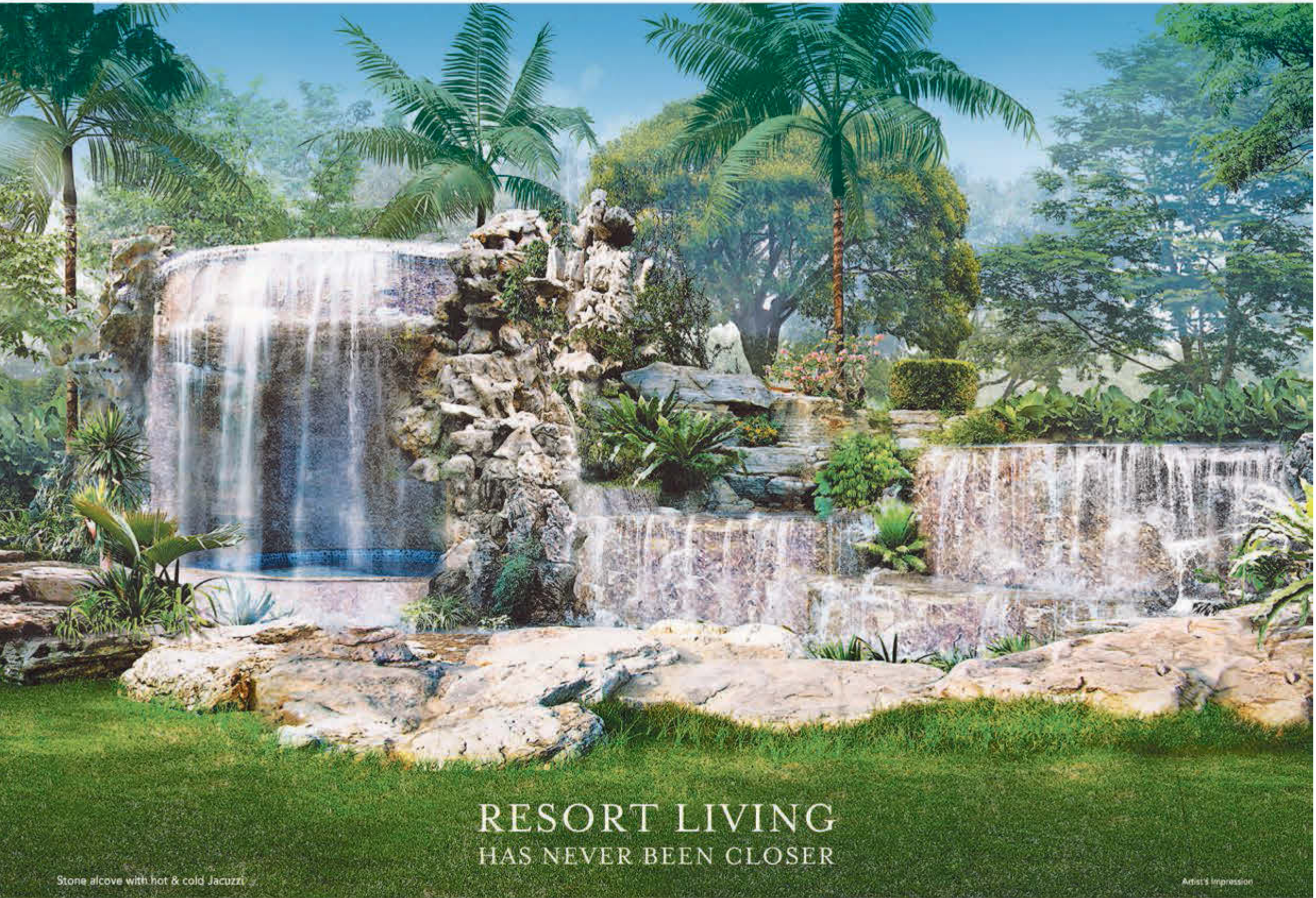
Total trade last year, which includes oil products, grew by 9.2 per cent, compared with an 11.1 per cent increase in 2017. Exports grew 7.9 per cent and imports grew 10.6 per cent last year.

Total services trade rose by 2.3 per cent last year to reach \$500.4 billion, following an 11.7 per cent expansion in 2017.

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[VENUE] THE JOVELL Show Suites along Flora Drive

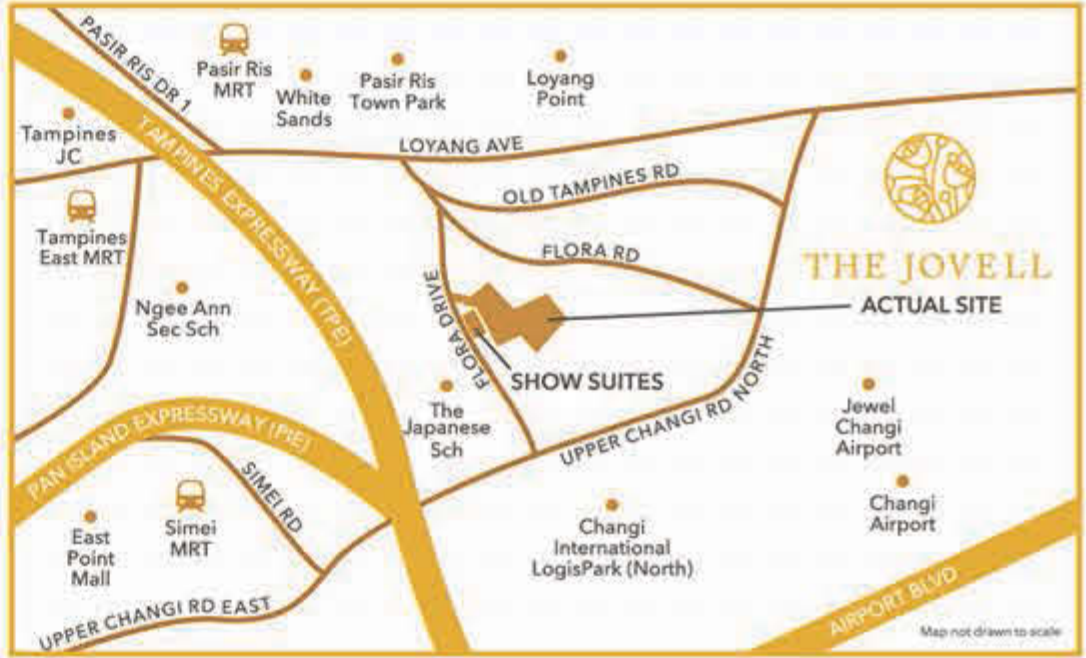
1.30PM
Registration

2.00PM
[Topic] 2019 Market Forecast: ROIs and Investment Strategies
[Speaker] Mr Winston Lee, Regional Head of Special Projects, PropertyGuru

2.45PM
[Topic] 12 Zodiac Forecast for 2019
[Speaker] Master Jet Lee, Founder, Yi Culture

3.30PM
[Topic] Seize The Rising Potential of the East Where Opportunities Blossom
[Speaker] Mr Marcus Chu, Chief Operating Officer, ERA

3.45PM
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The land transport system must transform to support Singapore's growth and the evolving needs of commuters, while taking into account technological disruption, demographic changes and land constraints, said Senior Minister of State for Transport Janil Puthucheary. LIANHE ZAOBAO FILE PHOTO



Peak-hour commutes of no more than 45 minutes by 2040: Panel

This is among its proposals to make public transport faster, safer and more inclusive

Zhaki Abdullah

By 2040, peak-hour commutes on public transport should take no more than 45 minutes, the Land Transport Master Plan Advisory Panel has proposed, which will help the average peak-hour commuter save about 15 minutes a day. This is one of the recommendations that the panel submitted to the Government yesterday to make public transport faster and better connected, as well as safer and more inclusive. Senior Minister of State for Transport Janil Puthucheary, who chaired the panel, said the land transport system must transform to support Singapore's growth and the evolving needs of commuters, while taking into account technological disruption, demographic

changes and land constraints.

The 15-member panel took in more than 7,400 responses from commuters, transport workers, industry representatives and academics in the past six months to formulate its proposals.

At a news conference yesterday, panel member Paul Barter – a transport policy researcher at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy – said the needs of various groups must be balanced.

For example, one of the recommendations is to redesign roads in residential areas to lower motor vehicle speeds.

While this might impact motorists, it would help significantly reduce injuries and fatalities among pedestrians, said Dr Barter.

The interests of these various groups often intersect, he noted.

"No one is just a motorist, or a cyclist, or a bus user," he said. "We are just all people who want to get around."

National Transport Workers' Union executive secretary Melvin

Yong said some trade-offs are inevitable when improving the transport network here.

"For bus speeds to improve, buses must have greater priority on roads. For better first- and last-mile journeys, more road space may have to be freed up for pedestrians and cycling infrastructure," he said, giving two of the recommendations as examples.

The panel also sought to make the transport system more inclusive by, for example, using technology to enhance signs and announcements for those with disabilities.

SPD resource and impact director Joyce Wong said those with visual impairment may have difficulty in identifying bus numbers.

Singapore needs to build a more "caring and gracious commuting culture", she added.

The panel also considered the issue of affordability of public transport, said Dr Janil.

One of the proposals is to have decentralisation through the development of more regional centres

to allow jobs and amenities to be closer to homes.

Public Transport Council chairman Richard Magnus said this could help cut travelling costs for commuters.

But experts such as Nanyang Technological University senior transport research consultant Gopinath Menon said more could be done to lower private vehicle ownership, in line with the Republic's car-lite vision.

National University of Singapore economist Timothy Wong said "heavy-handed anti-car policies" such as raising the price of parking may be necessary, rather than just pro-public transit policies.

In a Facebook post, Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan thanked the panel, and said his ministry would study the recommendations carefully.

"I will respond to the recommendations at next month's Budget debate in Parliament," he said.

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Recommendations submitted by panel

The advisory panel's recommendations for the new Land Transport Master Plan cover three broad areas that aim to make Singapore's transport network well-connected, inclusive and safer by 2040.

FASTER JOURNEYS

- Prioritise public transport through measures such as dedicated bus lanes for faster rides.
- More investment in cycling and walking infrastructure for first- and last-mile journeys. For example, repurpose roads to allow for more and wider shared paths for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Make travelling more seamless by reducing the number of transfers needed.
- Increase adoption of technology such as by introducing autonomous vehicles.
- Develop more regional centres – such as the Jurong Lake District and the Punggol Digital District – to bring jobs and amenities closer to people's homes.

TRANSPORT FOR ALL

- Give greater recognition to commuters who go out of their way to help others.
- Provide more extensive training to transport workers so that they can help all commuters, including those with special needs.
- Make public transport infrastructure barrier free, enhance signs and announcements for the benefit of the elderly as well as those who are hard of hearing or have visual difficulties.

HEALTHIER, SAFER JOURNEYS

- Redesign towns to provide more space for walking, cycling and personal mobility devices.
- Redesign roads to slow down traffic, especially in residential estates, to make it safer for pedestrians.
- Create more dedicated cycling paths to reduce potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.
- Adopt cleaner, more energy-efficient fuel sources for public buses to reduce air and noise pollution. Taxi and private-hire car fleets should also set targets for the adoption of cleaner vehicles.

Zhaki Abdullah

INTERSECTING INTERESTS

No one is just a motorist, or a cyclist, or a bus user. We are just all people who want to get around.



PANEL MEMBER PAUL BARTER, noting how the interests of various groups of road users often intersect.

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Delivery takes twice as long if no one's at home, says Mr Rajab Abu Noh, a postman for 43 years



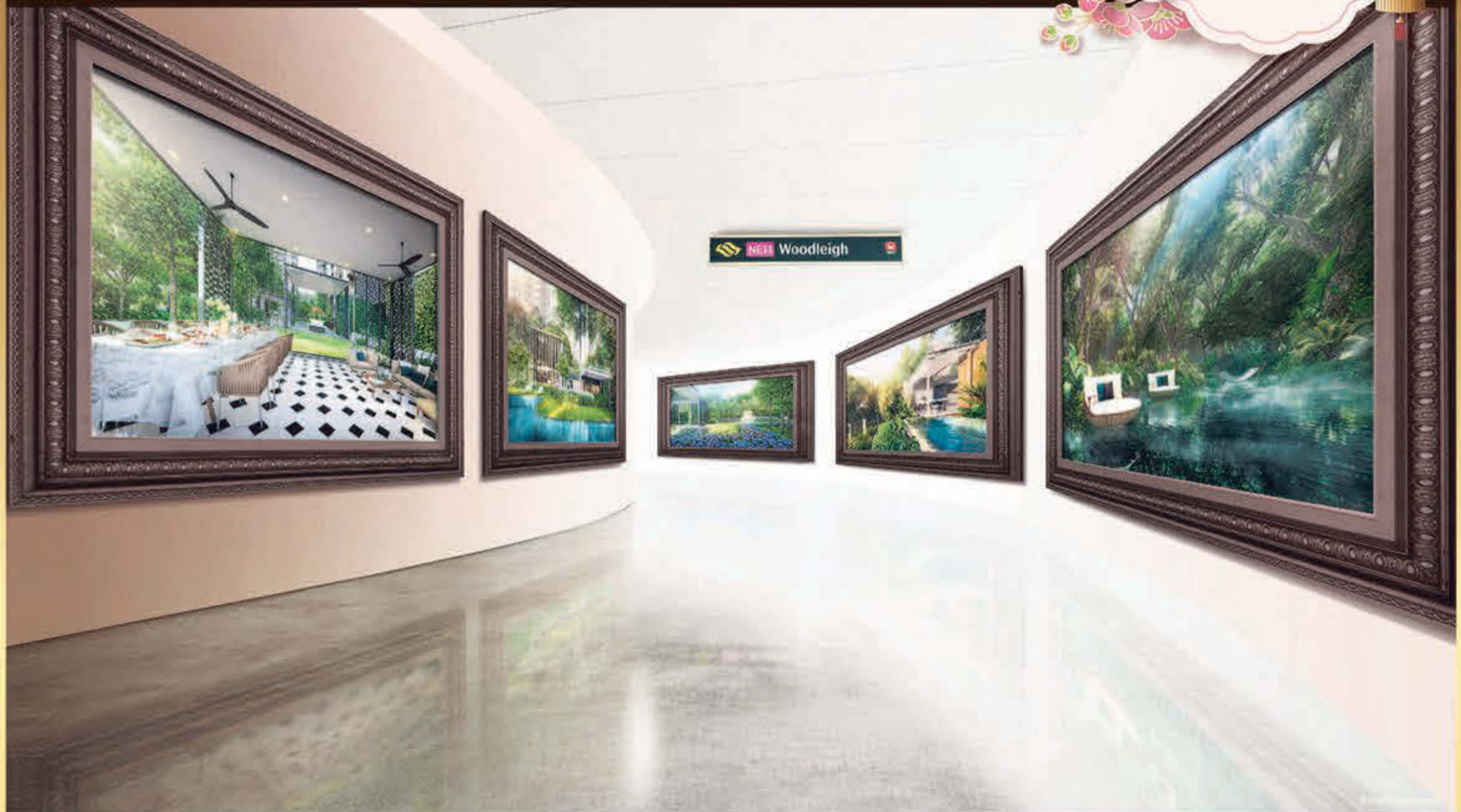
Lunch With Sumiko
Forging connections

S. Iswaran tells Sumiko Tan why S'pore has to plug into the digital economy, why he picked up Mandarin and lessons he got from his mother



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Individual's role key in cyber security, says Iswaran

Digital defence campaign launched to raise Singaporeans' awareness of their part to play



Mr Iswaran (far right), who is also in charge of cyber security, with Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information Sim Ann and Senior Minister of State for Defence Maliki Osman on the Infocomm Media Development Authority's Lab on Wheels bus at Fort Canning yesterday.

Lim Min Zhang

As Singapore strives to be a vibrant smart nation, a new enemy has reared its ugly head and its defeat hinges critically on the country building a strong digital defence, Communications and Information Minister S. Iswaran said yesterday.

Embedded in this defence is the vital role of Singaporeans, he added, noting that scammers have become more skilled at creating believable URLs and customised phishing messages.

Since last September, more than 90 victims have been deceived into giving their DBS Internet banking details on fraudulent websites.

But online scams are just one hostile force among various threats that include malicious cyber attacks, like the recent one on SingHealth, Singapore's largest cluster of healthcare institutions, as well as the widespread circulation of false rumours, such as fake claims about the disrupt-

tion of a Thai pusam procession in January last year by a police officer and a member of the Hindu Endowments Board.

The scourge, which exists across the economy, government and society, has also prompted the introduction of a sixth pillar in Total Defence – that of digital defence, said Mr Iswaran, who is also Minister-in-charge of Cyber Security. He was speaking at an event to commemorate Total Defence.

The change is the first in 35 years since Total Defence was introduced in 1984 to underline the role of each citizen and the collective commitment to defend "our nation and our way of life".

Last October, Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen hinted at the possible addition, and he confirmed the move in his annual Total Defence Day video message on Thursday.

Yesterday, Mr Iswaran took it a step further when he launched a digital defence campaign logo with the tagline "Be Secure, Alert,

and Responsible Online", along with Senior Minister of State for Defence Maliki Osman.

The launch not only coincided with Total Defence Day – which falls on Feb 15 every year to remember the day in 1942 when the British surrendered to the Japanese during World War II – but it was also held at Fort Canning, as the British surrender took place in a bunker there.

The wartime years saw people being tortured by the Kempeitai police and suffering severe shortages, especially of food.

"These stark memories are a vivid reminder of the importance of building a strong Singapore Armed Forces and being prepared for emergencies," said Mr Iswaran.

They also underscore that defending includes building a strong economy, living harmoniously with people of all backgrounds and forging a resilient society with a strong shared Singapore identity.

These are all encapsulated in the five pillars of Total Defence: mili-

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ultimately, the individual citizen is on the front line of digital defence, and we each have a critical role to play by being secure, alert and responsible online.



MINISTER-IN-CHARGE OF CYBER SECURITY S. ISWARAN on each Singaporean's role in digital defence.

tary, civil, economic, social and psychological.

Referring to the elusive nature of today's digital threats compared with conventional ones, Mr Iswaran warned: "It will only get more difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood, as artificial intelligence exacerbates the spread and seamlessness with which 'deep-fake' images and videos can be created."

In putting digital defence into action, the Singaporean's role cannot be overemphasised, he said.

"Ultimately, the individual citizen is on the front line of digital defence, and we each have a critical role to play by being secure, alert and responsible online."

At the event, Mr Iswaran also witnessed a ceremony where recruits of the Commando Training Institute were presented with their SAR-21 rifles in public for the first time.

He also announced a new initiative to support the digital defence pillar: A new cyber-security theme for the Infocomm Media Development Authority's Lab on Wheels programme, in which buses with hands-on activities aim to visit two secondary schools a week.

Students will learn how personal data can be extracted from social media accounts, how to create a strong password and get tips on identifying phishing e-mails.

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Commentary

Making digital defence part of Singaporeans' mindset



Hariz Baharudin

Most who go through the education system here would be familiar with the concept of Total Defence.

Some would recall drama performances during school assembly, some remember the national warning system tests and others even can recollect the taste of sweet potatoes or tapioca that they had to eat during recess time to remember what it was like for their seniors during the Japanese Occupation.

Through these efforts since its launch in 1984, the concept of Total Defence and its five pillars have been seared into the minds of Singaporeans.

Psychological, social, civil, military and economic defence are not alien concepts and, through Total Defence, their importance is drilled into everyone.

With the inclusion of digital defence as the sixth pillar yesterday, the aim is to ensure the dangers of online threats and the outpatient role in combating them will be etched into the minds of Singaporeans too.

From a young age, Singaporeans will hopefully better understand the necessity of good cyber hygiene and be sensitised to methods hackers can use to wreak havoc online, like phishing e-mails or malware links.

Some might say this effort is too little too late, as the inclusion comes after many cyber attacks both here and overseas.

Singapore was struck by its worst cyber attack last June, when the data of 1.5 million patients and the outpatient prescription information of 160,000 people, including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, were stolen by hackers.

Recently, it was announced that the personal data of 14,200 people on Singapore's HIV Registry was leaked.

Attacks happen worldwide too. In December 2015, in the middle of a cold winter's night, a cyber attack on Ukraine's power grid left more than 200,000 people without electricity for hours.

But any effort to bolster defences against cyber threats, no matter what kind of effort it may be or what its timing is, could make a difference.

Take the findings from the high-level investigation into the SingHealth data breach.

One of the contributing factors which allowed hackers to get in was poor cyber hygiene by an administrator who used the easily guessed P@ssw0rd as password.

An individual sensitised to the need for good cyber habits and the dangers of weak passwords

would not make this mistake.

Furthermore, digital defence may have the potential to refresh the concept of Total Defence, seeing that it is a pillar that cuts across all the other five.

For military defence, the Singapore Armed Forces has been investing resources in training cyber defenders, with plans to build a corps of about 2,600 cyber defenders in the next decade.

The threat that fake news poses to the racial and religious harmony of Singapore is real, and a lack of cyber vigilance could allow disinformation to tear apart the social defence Singapore has built up. And no matter how prosperous Singapore is and how strong its economic defence is, any corporation can be brought to its knees if hackers are allowed to get in and use their many high-tech tools to disrupt business.

It is important to remember that this is the first time since Total Defence was launched 35 years ago that a new pillar is being added.

The threat that online attacks pose has become so high that it is now recognised in what is arguably the most recognised national defence initiative. So, the inclusion of digital defence in Total Defence might be late, but it is better late than never.

Given the risks that cyber attacks and disinformation pose, and the importance of cyber security, any efforts made to beef up the latter will always be important.

The challenge now is for the Government to ensure that this new pillar is implemented as effectively as the others, and without diluting the earlier five. A slew of outreach initiatives was mentioned by Minister for Communications and Information S. Iswaran, who is also Minister-in-charge of Cyber Security, at yesterday's launch of the digital defence pillar. He also said that digital defence is critical in Singapore's aim to be a vibrant Smart Nation, which is true.

Even with the most advanced of solutions and technologies, a nation would not be a smart one if it does not have proper security infrastructure.

Cyber attacks that leverage a nation's interconnectedness for nefarious purposes can cripple and destroy it.

With the inclusion of the digital defence pillar in Total Defence, cyber security is elevated to the same position as our racial harmony, our military capabilities or our economic competitiveness. That means we cannot take digital defence for granted, and we have to always do more to build it up.

For a start, the outreach initiatives for digital defence cannot be one-off efforts.

Collaboration – among the private sector, the Government and the public – is also key, given the multi-faceted nature of digital threats and defence.

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Why the new pillar was added

Discussions to add a sixth pillar of digital defence to Total Defence began about four years ago, with the formation of the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore in 2015.

While there was some resistance towards changing a framework that had been in place for more than 30 years, the choice to add the extra pillar, rather than explain digital defence using the other five, became increasingly clear, said Nexus director Joseph Tan.

Nexus is the central agency for National Education and Total Defence under the Ministry of Defence.

Col Tan said that some of the factors which led to the decision to drive home the importance of being prepared against digital threats included how Singaporeans did not

seem concerned enough about cyber security, and a number of major data breaches, such as the one that happened to SingHealth last year.

Even with an incident as serious as Singapore's worst cyber attack, where hackers stole the personal data of 1.5 million SingHealth patients and the outpatient prescription details of 160,000 people, the average man in the street felt that "it was just NRIC and data, and it was no big deal", said Col Tan.

We were struggling with whether to wrap digital defence under the other five pillars for a couple of years because we felt that we didn't want to confuse the public.

"(After all) you can explain some of these issues under the five," he told The Straits Times at the Nexus

office in Depot Road this week.

"But we simply feel that if we do that, you are diluting it too much. If you want a national-level conversation, if you want the new generation to embrace it as their own, then the new pillar is timely."

The Total Defence framework was launched 35 years ago in a very different era, said Col Tan.

That year, 1984, was when the original Macintosh computer – regarded as the first mass market personal computer – was first sold, he noted. The World Wide Web came along about five years later.

So, Total Defence was launched in a very different context and by a different generation, said Col Tan.

The other five pillars of Total Defence are military, civil, psychological,

social and economic defence.

"If you match it to generation, it is actually the Merdeka Generation," he said, referring to Singaporeans born in the 1950s.

"Total Defence was an expression of the nation at that point in time, a collective will, the *gotong-royong* spirit where everyone helped one another, making personal sacrifices for the community."

Col Tan said it is now timely to update Total Defence, with digitalisation being an increasing part of everyday life, and for a new generation to take ownership of it.

Adding a sixth pillar does not take away the importance of the other five, added Col Tan, who has been Nexus director since 2015.

To promote digital defence, Nexus

works with different agencies and ministries, such as the Ministry of Communications and Information, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Infocomm Media Development Authority and the National Library Board (NLB), he said.

Efforts include the NLB's Source, Understand, Research, Evaluate campaign to promote the importance of information discernment, and the police's advertisements on how to avoid being a target of online scams.

While the key message behind Total Defence has always been that everyone has a part to play, Col Tan believes that digital defence might be the most relevant pillar for the man in the street.

"This is because they are on the

front line. If you get hacked, if you get scammed, you are at the front line. So, that is where we want to drive home the message that even more so, everyone has to play a part in cyber security," he said.

He said school curricula will have to be updated. A new logo design competition will also be held as the current Total Defence logo shows only five pillars, he said.

"We will probably do a series of conversations to get people talking (about digital defence). But the youth we have talked to know it is something that their generation will have to deal with, so the sense of ownership is there, and it is quite promising."

Lim Min Zhang

Remembering those lost during World War II

Retired businessman Loh Weng Kee, 78, could not hold back his tears at the War Memorial Park during a service yesterday in commemoration of civilian victims of the Japanese Occupation.

He was accompanied by his wife Tim Yap Wah, 70, a retired businesswoman. His father was taken away by the Japanese when Mr Loh was a month old, and never returned.

He said: "It was a terrible, terrible chapter in our history. We still remember it vividly, although memories of our hardships are fading with each new generation. The young must know about this chapter and the importance of peace because wartime means great suffering for all."

The service was also to mark Total Defence Day. It was co-organised by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) and the Central National Education Office of the Ministry of Defence (MinDef). About 1,000 representatives from the SCCCI, MinDef, diplomatic corps, religious organisations, National Youth Council, business and clan associations, uniformed groups, schools and veterans' leagues attended the service, along with the families of the victims. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LIUAN



Gojek incident reminder of potential faultlines: Chan Chun Sing

Fabian Koh

A video of the recent spat between a Gojek driver and his passenger went viral, and many Singaporeans laughed at it, but Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing sees it as a reminder of the potential faultlines in Singapore society.

The video of the incident last month over the driver's route had ended with the driver talking to an auxiliary cop in Malay and the passenger questioning: "Is it because I am Chinese?"

Mr Chan said: "Where did that come from? While we laugh at it, sometimes when it comes to the crunch, people fall back on certain markers of their identity, which per-

haps reveals certain things that we should be aware of," he said yesterday. Had such an incident happened in the 1960s, when racial tensions were high and riots broke out, there could have been "very different consequences", he noted.

Mr Chan said that Singaporeans should prioritise their ethnic identities, "but we must never take it for granted that it will naturally be so".

He cited how in other countries like America, "even after hundreds of years, the visceral feeling of difference is still quite raw".

He was speaking at the Asia Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers Alumni Distinguished Speakers' Lecture.

"Our multi-ethnic and multi-cultural ancestries mean that we will always be subjected to attempts to influence and control our domestic agenda," he said in a speech.

"They can come in the form of incentives, especially with the promise of short-term returns. They can come in the form of threats, to make us afraid or to make us waver. Yet at other times, they can take the form of dividing and trying to divide Singaporeans and our society to the benefit of the foreign players," added Mr Chan.

This threat is compounded by the pervasiveness of the Internet and social media, he said.

Cyberspace is an easy and affordable channel to use to spread content at far greater speed, and the "impact of messages or content sharing through the ubiquitous social media platform is underestimated", he added.

Enemies can now use digital means to attack Singapore, destroying the economy, tearing the social fabric and targeting citizens' fundamental beliefs and commitments.

Senior Minister of State for Law Edwin Tong had on Tuesday told Parliament that there was a "curious" spike in online comments critical of Singapore on social media, when the dispute with Malaysia over maritime and airspace issues late last year was top news. Mr Tong said the posts were made using "essentially" anonymous accounts.

Yesterday, Mr Chan said managing the respectability of social media cohesion and stability will become even more critical, but it is not practical for Singapore to shut its doors. He said: "That is not the way we will defend ourselves. We will learn to operate in this new terrain, navigate this new terrain, and leverage this new terrain for our

own defences."

However, we need to be vigilant, watchful, but never fearful," he added. "Social and psychological defence have become even more critical at this juncture of our history."

Mr Chan's speech yesterday came as digital defence was added as the sixth pillar of Total Defence on Total Defence Day, which falls on Feb 15 every year to mark the day the British surrendered the island to Japanese forces.

Mr Chan also said the Government has to help people understand the reality of geopolitics and the challenges facing Singapore.

"When things happen or when we are targeted, understanding the 'why' is more critical than just comprehending the 'what'. Know why others are feeling a certain way and why they are taking a certain action towards us," he said.

Mr Chan added that in countering threats from external influences, Singaporeans must always bear in mind the country's long-term interest. "We have to remember, each time and every time, that only Singaporeans will decide our future and not allow anyone else to coerce or decide for us," he said.

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Mr Indra Shaiful made the painful decision to take his wife, Madam Salinah Mohamed, off life support on Valentine's Day. PHOTOS: FACEBOOK/ K. SHANMUGAM SC, KEVIN LIM



Police officer in accident taken off life support



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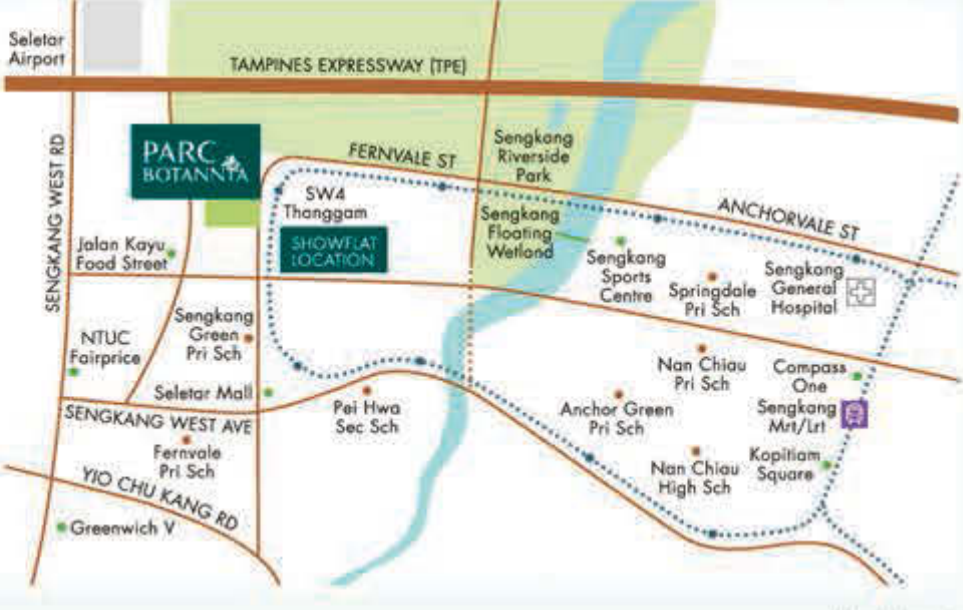
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Mother of three hit by car on way home; man arrested for dangerous driving

Cara Wong

They were secondary school sweethearts who were to have celebrated their 14th wedding anniversary this month.

But Madam Salinah Mohamed's plans for a romantic overseas trip with her husband lay in tatters after she suffered extensive head injuries in a car accident on Sunday.

Four days later, on Valentine's Day, she was taken off life support.

The painful decision to part with her was taken by her 41-year-old husband Indra Shaiful, who said: "We knew there was no point for her to stay on since there was no way she would have survived."

Doctors had told him that she was brain dead.

A police officer and mother of three, Madam Salinah, 41, was hit by a car at the junction of Maxwell Road and Shenton Way while on her way home from work.

The police said a 51-year-old male driver has been arrested for dangerous driving.

Madam Salinah was taken to Singapore General Hospital, and she went into a deep coma.

Her head injuries were so severe that the doctors initially were afraid to move her for tests, said her younger brother, Mr Saiizan Mohamed, 38.

"It was a big shock for all of us when we saw her at the A&E. I could feel my whole body shivering and I couldn't stand straight," said Mr Saiizan, a sales assistant.

By Wednesday, doctors found, after carrying out tests, that she was effectively brain dead, he added.

Mr Indra, a chauffeur, said he communicated with his wife at 9.22pm on Sunday.

A minute later, she was hit by the car.

She had sent him a text to arrange to meet at Waterway Point to buy groceries together.

But at about 10pm, he received a call from the hospital, and he dashed to her bedside.

"I had been with her since Sunday, when she was fighting for her life, but I didn't get to talk to her at all," said Mr Indra, speaking to The Straits Times after Madam Salinah's funeral yesterday.

She was easygoing, well liked by everyone and loved to plan surprises and present gifts to her friends, he added.

They had planned a short getaway to celebrate their wedding anniversary on Feb 28, he said.

He met her in 1994, when they were students at First Toa Payoh Secondary School.

Their two daughters, aged nine and 12, and 11-year-old son miss their mother most just before they go to sleep, he said.

His younger daughter used to hold her mother's hand as she fell asleep, he added.

"My son is also close to my wife. When he is alone and doing nothing now, he cries secretly," he said.

"They will be missing the motherly love that every child should have."

He added: "I can only hope that with all the prayers and good wishes from everyone, everything will go well."

But the loss will be felt long and deeply by Mr Indra: "She had been my soulmate, and she had always been there for me."

"It feels like I have lost a part of me."

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Tharman: Parenting must evolve with education system

He says children need high expectations set for them and support to think independently

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

As Singapore broadens its education system, parenting also needs to evolve, Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam said yesterday.

"Kids need a mix of high expectations set for them and encouragement to think independently, think originally and develop their own interests," he said at an education conference at Hwa Chong Institution.

The event was part of a line-up of talks with prominent speakers that the school has organised to mark its 100th anniversary this year.

Citing studies in the United States on the trend of "helicopter parenting", Mr Tharman said that such behaviour – where parents hover unnecessarily over their children – has long-term psychological side-effects on children.

"There is greater sense of anxiety, a loss of a sense of individuality or independence, and greater stress," he said, adding that children whose parents set high expectations but are supportive do far better in their studies than those with authoritarian parents.

In a 30-minute address to about 600 educators, Mr Tharman gave a broad outline of where Singapore education stands today and what can be improved.

He stressed that Singapore's meritocracy must keep adapting to sustain social mobility – an inherent challenge that all mature societies face.

"What you see in other advanced countries could easily happen here, which is that while you retain some mobility in the middle of society, the top and the bottom tend to become encrusted," he said.

"The top tends to preserve its ability to succeed in meritocracy, and the bottom tends to get stuck at the bottom end of the ladder. It is happening in many societies, and we are beginning to see it happen here."

He noted that the Education Ministry has, over the years, made changes such as expanding subject-based banding – where students can take subjects at a higher level than their assigned stream – and broadening the Direct School Admission (DSA) scheme, which

recognises talents outside pupils' academic results.

He urged educators to make the best use of the DSA system, which he said was introduced as an "alternative set of doors" into schools.

"For schools like Hwa Chong and some others at the top, think hard about how you use the (DSA) system and the spread of students you are attracting from around the island," he said.

Pathways in education must also not be fixed because a person's potential is fluid, he said.

"We have also got to continue to ensure that our system of differentiating the pace and content of education, depending on a student's abilities at any one point in time, does not make him or his parents or his teachers assume that his abilities are fixed for all time."

Mr Tharman also said schools must provide space for students to think on their own, and education outside the classroom must be taken more seriously by all schools, to develop in students traits such as tenacity and empathy that are needed for the future.

He said the changes in the education system must ultimately give parents confidence that they are for the better of their children.

"I have never blamed parents for the way they behave for they are responding quite rationally to the incentives. The exams, the selection systems, the entry requirements," he said.

"Parents are quite rational; in Singapore, a little risk-averse, so they err on the side of overdoing things. Parents want their kids to succeed not just at age 16, but in their late 20s and late 30s and beyond. So, we have to evolve now."

PARENTING NEEDS TO CHANGE TOO

Parents are quite rational; in Singapore, a little risk-averse, so they err on the side of overdoing things. Parents want their kids to succeed not just at age 16, but in their late 20s and late 30s and beyond. So, we have to evolve now.



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER THARMAN SHANMUGARATNAM, speaking at a forum at Hwa Chong Institution yesterday.

ateng@sph.com.sg



Former Hwa Chong principals (from left) Hon Chiew Weng, Ang Wee Hiong, Tooh Fee San and Leong Fan Chin. The school launched a publication yesterday to recognise its past and present educators. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

Hwa Chong marks 100th year by honouring those behind its success

Hwa Chong Institution, one of Singapore's top schools, turns 100 years old this year.

The institution, set up by Chinese philanthropist Tan Kah Kee as The Chinese High School in 1919, is marking its centennial in a big way, with a heritage trail, a series of lectures and a musical.

Its gala dinner on March 21 – the school's Founder's Day – will be a homecoming for more than 12,000 alumni and members of the Hwa Chong family.

The school, which has played a key role in promoting bilingualism and biculturalism in Singapore, launched a publication yesterday to recognise its past and present educators. Hwa Chong Institution principal Pang Choon How, 42,

said yesterday that the book aims to honour those who have made a huge impact on the school.

Addressing his own former principals – Mr Tooh Fee San and Madam Leong Fan Chin – who were in the audience, Mr Pang said he was influenced by them as a student at The Chinese High School and Hwa Chong Junior College.

"I, too, have been a beneficiary of Hwa Chong, and have been inspired by many excellent and dedicated teachers and school leaders, so much so that now I have followed their footsteps to touch lives and nurture the next generation," he said.

Dr Tommie Chen, 39, a teacher who worked on the book, said previous commemorative books

celebrated the school's milestones and achievements.

This time, the team wanted to honour the people behind the school's success.

The head of department for English, who attended Hwa Chong from 1993 to 1998, said: "I am very honoured to be a part of this 100th anniversary celebration and to be able to pay tribute to my own former teachers."

There are 1,500 copies of the not-for-sale publication, which will be given to Hwa Chong educators and others.

The school, located in Bukit Timah, has about 3,900 students across six levels now.

Amelia Teng

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Demonstrators overturning a car yesterday during a protest in Jammu, India, against the attack on a bus that killed 44 Central Reserve Police Force personnel in south Kashmir on Thursday. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said there was "incontrovertible evidence" that Pakistan had a direct hand in the attack, and announced that India was stripping Pakistan of the Most Favoured Nation status. PHOTO: REUTERS

S'pore condemns senseless terror act

Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said Singapore strongly condemns the senseless act of terror in Pulwama, in Jammu and Kashmir state.

"I am saddened to hear of the brutal terror attack in Pulwama that has resulted in the tragic loss of life and injury. Please accept my heartfelt condolences for the victims and families who have lost their loved ones," Dr Balakrishnan said in his condolence letter yesterday to India's Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj.

"Singapore strongly condemns such senseless acts of terror and our thoughts and prayers are with the people of India at this time," he said, according to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs press statement. "We also hope for a speedy recovery for those who have been injured."

More than 40 paramilitary troops were killed on Thursday as explosives packed in a van ripped through a convoy bringing 2,500 troopers back from leave, not far from the main city of Srinagar.

It was one of the deadliest bombings in decades of bloodshed in the region. Kashmir has been at the heart of a conflict between India and Pakistan.

India accuses Pakistan of 'direct hand' in Kashmir terror attack

PM Modi warns of tough action as Islamabad denies involvement in attack that killed 44

Nirmala Ganapathy
India Bureau Chief
In New Delhi

India accused Pakistan of having a "direct hand" in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Kashmir and warned of stern action as anger and outrage mounted over the death of 44 soldiers.

Analysts said this would escalate tension between the two countries, particularly with pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take strong action ahead of the elections in the coming months.

On Thursday, a suicide bomber rammed a 350kg explosive-laden SUV into a bus carrying paramilitary soldiers belonging to the Central Reserve Police Force at Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir.

The soldiers, who along with the

armed forces, were stationed in Kashmir for peacekeeping, were part of a convoy. Local police identified the bombers as Adil Ahmed, a member of the Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), which claimed responsibility for the attack. Ahmed, 19, was a school dropout.

Mr Modi warned of tough action. "I know there is deep anger. Your blood boils looking at what has happened. At this moment, there are expectations and the feelings of a strong response which are quite natural. We have given full freedom to the security forces," he said in a statement on the attack.

"Our neighbour, which is already isolated by the global community, is in a state of illusion if it thinks it can demoralise India with its dastardly acts and nefarious designs."

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said,



Indian security forces inspecting the remains of a vehicle after the attack on a paramilitary convoy on Thursday in Pulwama, about 30km south of Srinagar, in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Indian schoolchildren in Amritsar paying tribute yesterday to the soldiers killed in the terror attack area of Kashmir. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

after a high-level government meeting, there was "incontrovertible evidence" that Pakistan had a direct hand in the attack, and announced that India was stripping Pakistan of the Most Favoured Nation status.

This should have limited impact as

trade between the two countries is low, at US\$2 billion (S\$2.7 billion).

Pakistan has denied having any hand in the terror attack on the convoy. "We strongly reject any insinuation by elements in the Indian government and media circles that

NOT DEMORALISED

I know there is deep anger. Your blood boils looking at what has happened. At this moment, there are expectations and the feelings of a strong response, which are quite natural. We have given full freedom to the security forces. Our neighbour, which is already isolated by the global community, is in a state of illusion if it thinks it can demoralise India with its dastardly acts and nefarious designs.



INDIA PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

seek to link the attack to the State of Pakistan without investigations," it said in a statement.

Yesterday, India also lodged a diplomatic protest over the attack and demanded verifiable action against the JeM, sources said.

In spite of a 2003 ceasefire agreement, both countries regularly exchange fire along the Line of Control, the de facto border.

In recent years, there has been a deterioration of law and order following the killing of Burhan Wani, the commander of the Kashmiri militant group Hizbul Mujahideen, by security forces in 2016. That year, India maintained it had launched surgical strikes in Pakistan in retaliation for a terror attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri.

Indian television debated if India would once again opt for a surgical strike in Pakistani territory.

"The options before the government are limited. We don't have dialogue with Pakistan," said former foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh. "There will be further freezing of relations preventing delegation meetings and people to people contact."

With elections coming, no government would like to be seen as helpless and lenient in the face of attack, he said, predicting a rise in tensions.

Global condemnation of the attack has been made, including by the US. "The UN-designated, Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammad has claimed responsibility for this heinous act. We call on all countries to uphold their responsibilities pursuant to UN Security Council resolutions to deny safe haven and support for terrorists," said the US State Department.

But analysts said India would have a tough time isolating its neighbour diplomatically especially as Pakistan, with its ties to the Taliban, is deemed crucial for US plans to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Security analysts said that investigations would include how the car got so close to the convoy and on possible security lapses.

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Over 70 years on, battle for Kashmir continues

NEW DELHI • Nuclear-armed neighbours India and Pakistan have already fought two wars over Kashmir, a former princely state that both countries claim in full.

A long-running insurgency on the Indian side of the disputed territory is now threatening to trigger another conflict after a suicide bombing on Thursday killed 44 Indian soldiers.

Here are the reasons for the dispute between India and Pakistan:

CONTESTED TERRITORY

Kashmir has been hotly contested by both countries even before they

won their independence from the British in August 1947.

As per the plan for the partition of India and Pakistan provided for by the Indian Independence Act, Kashmir was free to choose to accede to either country. But when the ruler of the state decided to go with India, a two-year war broke out in 1947. Nearly two decades later, another conflict began in 1965. In 1999, forces backed by the countries engaged in a brief but bitter conflict.

WHY IS THERE UNREST ON THE INDIAN SIDE?

Kashmir is the only Muslim-majority

state in Hindu-majority India. Many in Kashmir do not want to be governed by India, calling for either independence or a union with Pakistan, an Islamic republic.

The anger against India stems from high unemployment and heavy-handed security measures put in place to deal with a violent insurgency that erupted in 1989.

Things had calmed down somewhat in later years, but when a popular militant leader, Burhan Wani, was shot dead in July 2016, it sparked off fresh violence.

Since Wani's funeral, stone-pelting Kashmiris have clashed with In-

dian troops on a regular basis, often to help shield militants being hunted by the security forces. More than 500 people – including civilians, security forces and militants – were killed in 2018, the highest toll in a decade.

HOPES FOR PEACE

India and Pakistan had agreed to a ceasefire in 2003 after years of bloodshed along their de facto border, dubbed the Line of Control.

Pakistan later promised to stop funding insurgents and India offered militants amnesty if they laid down their arms.

The violence over Kashmir continued sporadically however, including a terror attack in the financial capital of Mumbai in 2008 that left over 160 people dead. India blamed Pakistan-based militants for that attack as well as others.

Since the government of Mr Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, there has been a breakdown in dialogue, with New Delhi making talks contingent on Pakistan taking action against militant groups operating from its soil.

Several attacks on Indian military bases in the state since 2016 have added to the chill in relations.

Breaches of safety rules blamed for New Delhi hotel fire

Building passed safety checks 14 months ago but probe of fire that killed 17 finds violations

NEW DELHI • A hotel that caught fire in the Indian capital, killing 17 people, passed safety checks 14 months ago, but an investigation has revealed breaches of regulations, such as faulty alarms, prompting a mass re-inspection of other hotels. Poorly enforced regulations lead to thousands of deaths in fires across

India each year and officials in New Delhi say an overstretched fire service is hampering safety efforts. The Hotel Arpit Palace passed a fire safety check in December 2017, but a copy of the initial police investigation showed several breaches of fire regulations, including a lack of signs to guide guests to exits and

fire alarms that did not work.

Delhi's fire service, which is responsible for safety inspections as well as fighting fires, is now reviewing certificates issued to more than 1,500 hotels in one of India's tourist hubs, a senior fire official said. But stretched resources mean the re-inspection process could take months. "Fire officers have to do a lot of work," said Delhi chief fire officer Vipin Kental. "We have to be inspectors and fight fires. We do not have the manpower."

The city has around 1,700 firefighters, he said, which is less than an eighth of the number in New York, a city with less than half of Delhi's population.

The fire is believed to have begun on the hotel's first floor on Tuesday, spreading quickly through wood-panelled corridors, police say.

Among the dead were members of a wedding party from Kerala and two Myanmar Buddhist pilgrims.

"From the outside, the building looked intact, but inside everything was completely charred," a police officer said.

Two of the 17 died after jumping out of windows in desperation after failing to find emergency exits, added the officer, who declined to be named.

"Fire preparedness is a matter of shockingly low priority in most parts of the country," said an editorial in the Indian Express, one of the country's leading newspapers.

A study last year by India's Home Ministry found that the country had just 2,000 of the more than 8,500 fire stations it needs.

Over 17,000 people died in fires in 2015, according to data from the

ministry, the last year for which figures are available. Fire is one of the leading causes of accidental death in India. Fire safety is an issue for shanty towns and some of India's most expensive real estate.

A day after the Arpit Palace disaster, over 250 makeshift homes were destroyed in a slum in Paschim Puri, a poor area of New Delhi, though no one was killed. In 2017, 14 people were killed during a birthday party at a high-end bar in India's financial capital of Mumbai.

In several upscale Delhi neighbourhoods, police shut hundreds of shops and restaurants last year for operating on floors meant for residential use, though many continue to operate illegally, residents say.

By the boarded-up Arpit Palace, wires from adjacent hotels still trail across the street, though staff there said they were complying with fire regulations.

Adding to the safety problems, poorly paid staff in the hotel and restaurant industries are often unable to help guests when fires break out, Mr Kental said. "They are not trained. They don't know what to do in the event of a fire." REUTERS

2,000

Number of fire stations in India, although more than 8,500 fire stations are needed.

>17,000

Number of people who died in fires in 2015.

1,700

Number of firefighters in Delhi, which is less than an eighth of the number in New York, a city with less than half of Delhi's population.



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HK court upholds legislative ban on activist 'Long Hair'

HONG KONG • A former Hong Kong lawmaker known for his long hair, Che Guevara T-shirts and colourful protest stunts failed yesterday to overturn a ban on his standing for the city's legislature.

Mr Leung Kwok Hung – known by the nickname "Long Hair" – was one of four lawmakers disqualified in 2017 for their antics during their swearing-in oaths to reflect their frustrations with Beijing's increased political control over the city.

One lawmaker quoted Mahatma Gandhi, while another deliberately read her oath at a snail's pace.

Mr Leung, 62, read his oath properly, but held aloft a yellow umbrella – symbolising his support for the city's pro-democracy protest movement.

The would-be lawmakers' antics helped spark an unprecedented legal intervention from Beijing, demanding that oaths be taken in a "solemn and sincere" manner.

Mr Leung was the only one of the four to contest the disqualification, but his appeal was thrown out by the Court of Appeal yesterday, which said the original ruling was "plainly right".

"It comes as no surprise, but it is unreasonable," Mr Leung told reporters outside the court after the judgment was handed down.

Beijing's intervention was a massive blow for the city's beleaguered democracy movement because it meant the balance of power in the partially elected legislature swung further to the pro-China camp and crippled its ability to veto Bills.



Mr Leung Kwok Hung, known by the nickname "Long Hair", speaking to the media yesterday before entering the High Court to hear the outcome of his appeal over his 2017 legislative disqualification. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

It also highlighted Beijing's role as the ultimate arbiter of Hong Kong's mini-Constitution, called the Basic Law.

Under the handover agreement signed with Britain, Hong Kong boasts liberties unseen on the mainland, including freedom of speech and an independent judiciary.

But the final arbiter of the Basic Law remains China's top legislative body, the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC).

It has made only five interpretations of the Basic Law since the 1997 handover, but its ruling on the oath-swearing ceremony was the first time it made a direct intervention in how Hong Kong's legislature can operate.

Mr Leung, who won more than 35,000 votes during Hong Kong's 2016 legislative elections, hit out at the NPCSC yesterday.

"They were not elected by the Chinese people, they were not elected by the Hong Kong citizens, and they got every authority to destroy the electoral result of Hong Kong," he said.

Mr Leung's activism has landed him in jail several times. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Fires burning in Pelalawan, Riau province, in 2015. The fires caused 140,000 Indonesians to suffer respiratory ailments after being exposed to the choking haze that travelled across borders and blanketed parts of Singapore and Malaysia.
PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Firms yet to compensate for Indonesia forest fires

Ten companies ordered to pay \$260m after the government filed suits flout court rulings

Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja
Indonesia Correspondent
In Jakarta

None of the companies responsible for plantation and forest fires in Indonesia have paid compensation to the government ordered by the courts.

Ten companies were ordered to pay 2.7 trillion rupiah (\$260 million) after the government filed lawsuits between 2013 and 2018 in connection with the illegal fires.

Another firm based in Pekanbaru, Riau, Merbau Pelalawan Lestari, a supplier to Singapore-based pulpwood company Asia Pacific Resources International, was fined a staggering 16.2 trillion rupiah in August 2016 largely for illegal logging on 5,590ha of forest.

"As citizens, if we don't pay our taxes, we get sent to prison. So why aren't the owners of these big companies being forced to pay what they owe or sent to prison if they don't pay?" Mr Arie Rompas, a senior Indonesia forest campaigner with Greenpeace, said in a statement yesterday.

Greenpeace noted that the 10 forest and plantation fire cases were lodged between 2012 and 2015, against oil palm, sago and pulpwood companies. The illegal logging case related to offences committed as far back as 2004.

"By not forcing these companies to pay, the government is sending a dangerous message: Company profit comes before the law, clean air, health and forest protection," Mr Arie said. He added that the amount in compensation owed to the Indonesian people could be used to finance large-scale forest restoration, as well as to build health clinics and emergency response facilities for use when the fires strike again.

Mr Jasmin Ragil Utomo, director for environmental dispute settlement at the Environment and Forestry Ministry, replying via text message to queries from The Straits Times, said that two of the 11 firms had expressed a willingness to pay the compensation, while an appeal lodged by two other firms were ongoing, making any demand for payment inappropriate at this point.

"Those that are not paying compensation will surely face asset sequestration," Mr Jasmin said.

Under the Indonesian legal system, firms which do not honour court rulings on monetary penalties can be deemed as having debts to the government. Failing to make repayment can lead to their assets being sequestered by the state.

President Joko Widodo's administration has been resolute in tackling forest and plantation fires, and illegal logging, following the 2015 fires which caused 140,000 Indonesians to suffer respiratory ailments after being exposed to the choking haze that travelled across borders

DANGEROUS MESSAGE

By not forcing these companies to pay, the government is sending a dangerous message: Company profit comes before the law, clean air, health and forest protection.



MR ARIE ROMPAS, a senior Indonesia forest campaigner with Greenpeace, said in a statement yesterday.

and blanketed parts of Singapore and Malaysia.

Stepped-up law enforcement – including a shoot-on-sight order against fire-starters – and better fire-fighting equipment mandated for plantation firms, have resulted in a significant decline in the scale of the fires, an annual phenomenon usually in the dry season. Mr Joko has cracked the whip on local officials too to get a grip on the problem, issuing an unprecedented threat to sack any provincial police chief or local military commander in areas where fires spread uncontrollably.

Since 2015, the government has also stepped up efforts to halt development of peatlands, as dried-out peatlands are prone to fire and were a major source of the choking, toxic haze. Between 2015 and 2018, Indonesia has administratively sanctioned 523 firms and individuals for environmental violations, according to the government. It claimed that the total forest area saved as a result of more stringent prevention and law enforcement reached 8.29 million ha since the 2015 fires.

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Mahathir: China a valuable trading partner

KUALA LUMPUR • Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has described China as a valuable trading partner, saying trade ties between the two countries would be maintained.

He said China was Malaysia's biggest trading partner and that Malaysia also draws big investors from China, reported The Star.

"When we first established ties with China, it was still a Third World country. But now China has made tremendous progress, and this influences our relationship," he told reporters after chairing Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's supreme council meeting yesterday.

Tun Dr Mahathir will be going on a working visit to China in April, during which he will look at the Belt and Road Initiative, China's construction and transport plan to link Asia, Africa and Europe. "We will state our stand, and state our support, although China is (on a) different (level) now," he said.

Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke said yesterday that while in Beijing, Dr Mahathir will be attending the Belt and Road Initiative summit.

"In the past few months, many have expressed concern about Malaysia's relationship with China," he was quoted as saying by news site The Malaysian Insight. "I can say here that although Malaysia has seen a change of government, its foreign policy concerning China remains the same."

After coming to power in May last year, Dr Mahathir vowed to renegotiate or cancel what he called "unfair" Chinese projects authorised by his predecessor Najib Razak.

Two pipeline projects with China costing RM9.4 billion (\$3.1 billion) were among a handful of China-funded mega infrastructure projects – entered into by the previous Barisan Nasional government – that were scrutinised by the new administration in a bid to tackle state debts totalling more than RM1 trillion.

Dr Mahathir's administration is also reviewing the RM81 billion East Coast Rail Link, meant to link the east and west coasts of Peninsular Malaysia.

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Indonesia will push back the deadline to label halal products after the industry expressed concerns that the move could threaten supplies of vaccines and other products.
PHOTO: BLOOMBERG



Jakarta to defer halal label deadline amid industry fears

JAKARTA • Indonesia will push back by as much as seven years an October deadline for halal labels on food, drugs and cosmetics, after the industry voiced fears that the move could bring chaos and threaten supplies of life-saving vaccines and other products.

In 2014, the world's biggest Muslim-majority country adopted a measure for labels certifying whether products are halal, or suitable for consumption in line with Islamic laws.

If not labelled, they would face sale bans.

A presidential decree giving industries a transition period of several years to comply with the law now awaits President Joko Widodo's signature, said Dr Sukoso, the head of the panel overseeing

the process along with Muslim clerics.

"We're preparing the infrastructure now, for example a halal information system," he added. "We hope the process can run smoothly and we can reach every corner of Indonesia."

The food industry would be given a deadline until 2024 to get halal certificates, said Dr Sukoso, who goes by one name and is the chief of the Halal Product Assurance Body, though he declined to give a date for compliance by the industry.

Mr Parulian Simanjuntak, head of the International Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Group representing drug firms, said government consultations showed the industry would have until 2026 to comply, but that might not be enough.

"We're still not happy," he said.

Mr Simanjuntak said the definition of halal was too strict and would mean life-saving products, such as vaccines or drugs containing blood, could be barred after the deadline passed.

It would be impossible to force drug companies to create halal-specific products for Indonesia alone, since the country has a relatively small share of the global market, he said, adding he was concerned it could create "some kind of chaos".

Originally intended as a voluntary step, the law was meant partly to help boost exports to Muslim countries by upgrading halal certificates issued by a group of clerics, the Indonesian Ulama Council, that is recognised by few countries, as it is not a government body. REUTERS

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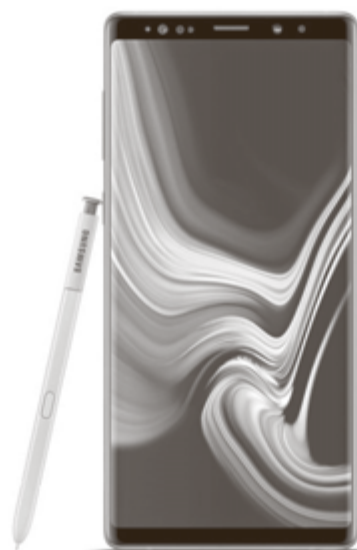


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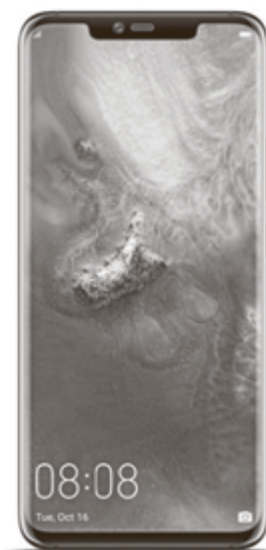


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Johor MB's academic info removed from govt portal

JOHOR BARU • The Johor government portal has changed Menteri Besar Osman Sopian's biodata, removing his academic credentials.

This comes after a report by Malay daily Sinar Harian in which Datuk Osman said he did the responsible thing by directing all information relating to his diploma and degree from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) to be taken down

from any official website.

"I once studied at Kolej Pertanian Malaya (Malaya Agricultural College) before it was upgraded into UPM but I never completed my studies," he said.

"Without my knowledge, several websites claimed I graduated with a diploma and a degree in accountancy from UPM," he told the news portal on Thursday.

Checks by The Star on the Johor government portal found that amendments had been made to Mr Osman's biodata.

His education background has been completely removed and replaced by his career achievements.

Mr Osman is among several leaders of the ruling Pakatan Harapan coalition whose education credentials are being questioned.

The others are Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu, Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin, Deputy Foreign Minister Marzuki Yahya and Perak executive councillor Paul Yong Choo Kiong.

The scandal is embarrassing for

PH, which has always claimed to be a government of high integrity.

Facebook page Ops Johor had earlier questioned Mr Osman's educational background and alleged that the leader did not obtain a university degree. It also tried to search for Mr Osman's name on the UPM portal but could not find anything.

The Johor government portal previously stated that Mr Osman obtained a certificate in accountancy from Metro Manila College in the Philippines in 1985, as well as a diploma and a degree in accountancy from UPM. It did not mention the year the diploma and degree from UPM were awarded.

THE STAR/ASIANEWS NETWORK



Mr Osman Sopian is among several Pakatan Harapan leaders whose education credentials are being questioned. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN



Former Malaysian prime minister Najib Razak having a picture taken with supporters while shopping at Tesco supermarket in Semenyih on Wednesday. Najib seems to be enjoying new-found popularity despite facing dozens of charges linked to graft and financial fraud. He also appears to have thousands of Facebook followers, who say they regret voting for PH last May. PHOTO: FACEBOOK/NAJIB RAZAK

Pakatan faces Malay vote test in Semenyih polls

Win for Mahathir's party candidate crucial for overall confidence in ruling coalition

Hazlin Hassan
Malaysia Correspondent
In Kuala Lumpur

Increasing unhappiness among Malay voters over the ruling Pakatan Harapan's (PH) performance could play a crucial role in an

upcoming by-election in the Malay-majority seat of Semenyih next month, where a victory for Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's party may help turn the tide and boost confidence in his coalition.

Malays comprise 69 per cent of the electorate in the quiet Selangor town of Semenyih, which is home

to Britain's University of Nottingham Malaysia campus, and the Broga Hill popular among hikers.

Located 20km south of the capital Kuala Lumpur, the area has undergone rapid growth over the past decade, and continues to see large-scale development, with more homes, international schools and shopping malls being built.

With a recent survey published on Jan 31 by pollster Ilham Centre and Penang Institute showing rising discontent among Malays over

how the PH administration is handling Malay issues and Islam, the by-election will test whether Tun Dr Mahathir's Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) still has clout among Malays and can retain the state seat.

Almost 55 per cent of those surveyed felt PH is ignoring Malay Muslim rights – this may cost PH dearly.

Campaigning officially begins only today, but PH and its closest rival, Barisan Nasional (BN), have already been working the ground.

Former premier Najib Razak was mobbed by fans, mainly Malays, when he visited a Tesco supermarket in Semenyih on Wednesday.

The former president of Umno, which leads the BN pact, seems to be enjoying new-found popularity despite facing dozens of charges linked to graft and financial fraud after swopping his suit for a hoodie and attempting to win over working-class Malays with his slogan "Malu apa, bossku?" which means "Why the shame, boss?"

Najib appears to have thousands of Facebook followers, many of whom complain about the cost of living and say they regret voting for PH in the May general election, which the BN administration lost.

Many Malays also believe that the Chinese-dominated Democratic Action Party is controlling the government as one of the four parties in the PH coalition. The other two are Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and Parti Amanah Negara.

Although PH has won four by-elections – three in Selangor and the other in Port Dickson, where PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim staged his political comeback – it lost the one held in Cameron Highlands in January to the incumbent BN candidate, who won by 3,238 votes.

It will not bode well for PH if it loses the Semenyih seat, located in its stronghold state of Selangor.

For now, the polls indicate that PH looks likely to retain Semenyih.

The Selangor government think-tank Institut Darul Ehsan (IDE) predicts that PH will win in Semenyih, although it found that 46 per cent of Malay voters there were dissatisfied with the state government.

IDE deputy chairman Mohamad Redzuan Othman said a survey it ran between Jan 30 and Feb 1 found that PH would retain 46 per cent of the vote in the by-election, while BN may get 37 per cent.

Still, BN could gain the edge now that it has an informal pact with the

conservative Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) for PAS to stay out of the race, unlike last May, when votes were mainly split three ways.

PPBM's Mr Bakhtiar Mohd Nor won the seat with 23,428 votes. BN's Datuk Johan Abdul Aziz garnered 14,464 and Mr Mad Shahmidur Mat Kosim (PAS) won 6,966 votes. If PAS supporters vote for BN this time, BN will need to sway only 2,000 more voters its way.

"PH is seen as having underperformed... and failing to fulfil promises made in their manifesto," said analyst Awang Azman Awang Pawi of Universiti Malaya, who estimates support for PH among Malay voters in Semenyih at 53 per cent, while support for BN and PAS hovers around 47 per cent.

Analyst Amir Fareed Rahim of KRA political consultancy noted that the stakes are higher for Dr Mahathir's PPBM than it is for Umno and PAS, as this is the first time the party is contesting a by-election. "A victory may help turn the tide for PPBM with regard to the Malay base and will help boost confidence in PH and its leaders among the wider electorates," said Mr Amir.

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Home Minister again defends police's paid trip to Istanbul

Nadirah H. Rodzi
Malaysia Correspondent
In Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's Home Minister has again defended an all-expenses-paid trip to Istanbul taken by the national police chief, saying it was not sponsored by a private company.

Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin told reporters on Thursday that "there was nothing wrong" with the working trip as it was funded by the Malaysia Totalisator Board, a body under the Ministry of Finance that regulates betting agencies.

Tan Sri Mohamad Fuzi Harun, who is due to retire in May, found himself embroiled in controversy

after reports and photos emerged of him enjoying a lavish trip to Istanbul, Turkey just months ahead of his retirement from the force.

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), who travelled to Istanbul with 16 of his men, some of whom took their wives, had stayed at four-star Hotel Sura Hagia Sophia in the Sultanahmet district at an estimated cost of RM685 (S\$228) a room a night.

"It was definitely not a working trip," a source told The Straits Times. "Seeing that he's retiring in May, the Home Minister is cutting him some slack by closing one eye."

Mr Muhyiddin had earlier denied that the trip, which reportedly took place from Feb 7 to 12, was to reward



senior officers for their services.

Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng had said that the trip, apparently to learn how to tackle online gambling, was not funded by his ministry or by taxpayers. He said that the trip was approved in 2017 by the Malaysia Totalisator Board, which is funded by private numbers fore-

casting company Da Ma Cai.

The trip was first highlighted on Sunday by whistleblower site Sarawak Report, which estimated the cost of flights for the 17 policemen to be RM254,218 and accommodation to be RM58,225.

Mr Fuzi has yet to comment.

"There is no doubt that he is nice

but he has this habit of extending his stay to play golf after he's done with a meeting abroad," a senior officer told The Straits Times.

Mr Fuzi was appointed as the IGP on Sept 4, 2017, by former premier Najib Razak to replace Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar.

During his tenure, Mr Fuzi had fa-

Malaysian police chief Mohamad Fuzi Harun (sixth from right) and senior officers in front of the Istanbul police headquarters. PHOTO: FACEBOOK/COMFORT TOUR

mously said there was no solid evidence linking fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, better known as Jho Low, to any business deals made by state fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (IMDB).

Malaysia has since charged Low with money laundering of over US\$1 billion (S\$1.4 billion) of IMDB funds.

When Pakatan Harapan took over Putrajaya after last May's polls, many expected Mr Fuzi to be sacked for failing to act on the IMDB scandal.

"The government decided to keep him after a candidate, who was supposed to replace Fuzi, declined the offer. Fuzi had also personally gone to meet Dr Mahathir, expressing his wish to 'leave' with dignity once his term is up," said the officer, referring to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Malaysia is expected to announce the appointment of a new IGP and deputy IGP soon. Mr Fuzi's deputy, Tan Sri Noor Rashid Ibrahim, is due to retire next month.

There is speculation that Special Branch chief Abdul Hamid Bador will succeed Mr Fuzi.

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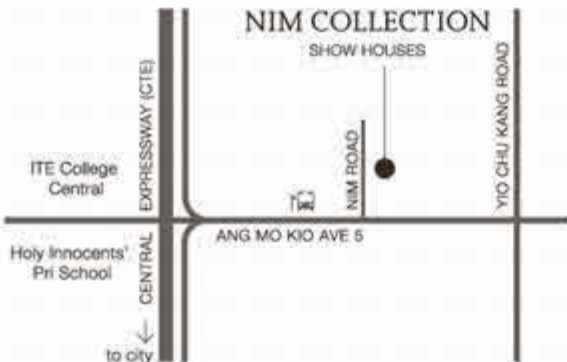
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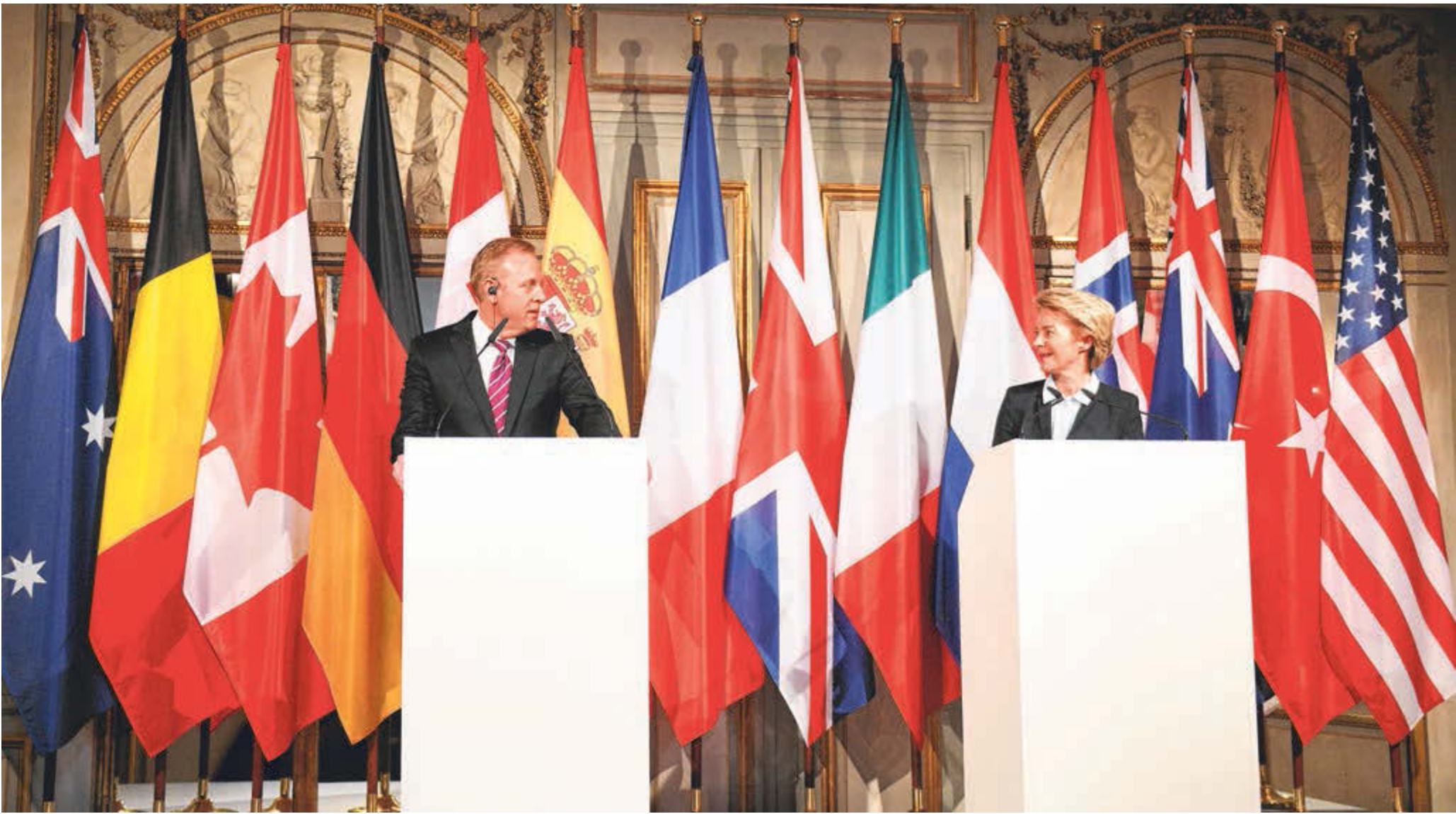
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Acting US Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan and German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen during a press conference at the Munich Security Conference yesterday. Mr Shanahan pledged ongoing support for the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria after its followers are finally ousted from Syria, while Ms von der Leyen warned that the militant group had not been defeated. PHOTO: DPA

US leads surge in Western defence spending: Report

Trump set to press Nato to spend even more as China and Russia raise their game, it says

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MUNICH • The United States led a rise in Western defence spending last year as it moved to keep ahead of Chinese and Russian pushes into advanced military technology, a report said yesterday.

US President Donald Trump will likely press European states to spend even more at a Nato conference in April, said the International Institute for Security Studies (IISS).

European powers would together have to find an extra US\$102 billion (S\$138 billion) to meet his latest demands, it added.

Worldwide outlays on weapons and defence rose 1.8 per cent to

more than US\$1.67 trillion last year – with the US on its own responsible for almost half that increase, according to The Military Balance report released at the Munich Security Conference.

The conference, which started yesterday and ends tomorrow, is attended by more than 500 participants, some of whom are heads of state and government, or political and security heavyweights.

The annual report said Western powers were concerned about Russia's upgrades of airbases and air-defence systems in Crimea – the peninsula it seized from Ukraine in

2014. Its stationing of an S-400 air defence system there increased Moscow's reach in the Black Sea, where it seized three Ukrainian ships last year.

But "China perhaps represents even more of a challenge, as it introduces yet more advanced military systems and is engaged in a strategy to improve its forces' ability to operate at distance from the homeland", the report added.

China's stated ambition to modernise its People's Liberation Army by 2035 was "supported by defence spending that has been on a relentlessly upward trajectory".

Slower Chinese economic growth had caused a slight deceleration in spending – but the defence budget still grew nearly 6 per cent between 2017 and last year. "Chinese naval capability is entering a new phase" as it launched cruisers and began sea trials for its first indigenous aircraft carrier, the report said.

Beijing was also improving its air force and pushing into new technologies, including very-high-speed cruise missiles and artificial intelligence.

Asean-Beijing South China Sea talks set to start by late-Feb

Negotiations for a pact between Asean nations and China aimed at easing tensions in the South China Sea are to begin later this month, said Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen early today at the Munich Security Conference in Germany.

Asean and China agreed at their summit in Singapore last November to the early conclusion of a code of conduct (COC) for the South China Sea.

"(Chinese) PM Li Keqiang, in Singapore in November last year, set a

proposed timeline for the COC to be finished in three years," noted Dr Ng, speaking at the Maritime Security Roundtable at the Munich Security Conference and Nato Centre of Excellence for Operations in Confined and Shallow Waters.

The code will set out norms of behaviour in the contested waters.

China and several Asean members – Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam – have overlapping claims in the disputed waters.

Asean and China have been work-

ing to fully implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties, the precursor to the COC, since 2002.

Negotiations on the COC began in March last year, following the adoption in 2017 of the framework for the COC.

"As ADMM/ADMM-Plus Chair last year, we developed the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters (Game), the first of its kind in the world," Dr Ng said today, referring to the Asean Defence Ministers' Meetings.

"As the Asean-China coordinator, we also facilitated the successful conduct of the Asean-China Maritime Exercise among Asean and Chinese navies in 2018," he said, according to the Ministry of Defence.

"All of these are practical confidence-building measures that minimise the risk of miscalculations, and build trust and confidence among militaries," he said at the round table titled "Bridging Troubled Waters – Deconflicting The

South China Sea Dispute".

Noting that no one thinks any country would attempt to forcibly push the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) out of the features on which it has built military bases in the South China Sea, Dr Ng tried to put things in perspective.

"Do the PLA bases and infrastructure in the South China Sea make it an equivalent of the Indopaccom (US Indo-Pacific Command) in Hawaii?" he said.

"The military facilities in Guam are approximately 12 times the size of China's expanded features in the South China Sea; and Hawaii, about 70 times; two Jima, a key island in the Pacific Theatre where the US and Japan had fought over in World War II, is comparable – about 1 1/2 times."

Still, to ensure stability in the South China Sea, Asean has taken a practical approach, to work on the COC "to constrain if not bind behaviour", said Dr Ng.

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Ex-Goldman exec to return to US to face charges over IMDB

Leslie Lopez
Regional Correspondent
In Kuala Lumpur

Roger Ng, a former Goldman Sachs bank executive who is currently in jail in Malaysia, has agreed to voluntarily return to the United States to face abatement charges in a scheme to loot state investment firm IMDB.

Lawyers saw the move as part of a deal to help the US Department of Justice (DOJ) build its case against his former employer.

Under a still-in-progress legal settlement, Ng agreed yesterday to waive his rights to his extradition committal proceedings in Malaysia and voluntarily return to New York to face charges in a US federal court that he helped his former boss to launder money and bribe govern-

ment officials as part of Goldman Sachs' work for IMalaysia Development Berhad (IMDB).

Ng, who left the investment bank and financial services company in 2014, agreed to waive his rights on extradition and would be sent to the US pending an order from the Malaysian Home Affairs Ministry, Judge Edwin Paramjithy Michael Muniandy said in a Kuala Lumpur court yesterday.

Mr Tan Hock Chuan, Ng's lawyer, asked for the order to be issued within 30 days, and noted that his client had reached an agreement with the DOJ on bail and other terms.

"The respondent intends to defend the case on its merits in the court of the Eastern District of New York, the United States," Mr Tan told the court.



Roger Ng's return to the US is seen as part of a deal to help the DOJ build its case against his former employer Goldman Sachs.

Lawyers close to the case said that Ng was likely to receive bail in the US and negotiations were ongoing for him to cooperate with the DOJ in the case that it is building against Goldman.

Goldman is being investigated by the Malaysian authorities and the DOJ over its role as underwriter and arranger of three bond sales that raised US\$6.5 billion (S\$8.8 billion) for IMDB.

Asked about Ng, a spokesman for the multinational firm said: "As we

have said all along, we are outraged that any employee of the firm would undertake the actions detailed in the government's charges."

A senior official at Malaysia's Attorney-General's Chambers noted that extradition proceedings are typically very drawn out when an accused such as Ng objects to the move. "At the end, it is up to him," the official said.

It is not clear how Malaysia will proceed with its legal campaign against Ng, who was arrested last November and subsequently charged with four counts for abetting Goldman in selling US\$6 billion of guaranteed notes and bonds issued by IMDB and its subsidiaries by omitting material information and publishing untrue information.

The DOJ has charged Ng, his former boss at Goldman, Tim Leissner, and fugitive Malaysian businessman Low Taek Jho with allegedly bribing officials in Malaysia and Abu Dhabi and laundering money raised by IMDB through its bond issues.

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Worldwide outlays on weapons and defence rose 1.8 per cent to more than US\$1.67 trillion last year – with the US on its own responsible for almost half that increase, according to The Military Balance report released at the Munich Security Conference.

Concerns in NZ over fraying China ties after Huawei ban

China retaliating after NZ joins West in taking tough stance on Chinese firm, observers claim

WELLINGTON • On Sunday, an Air New Zealand plane bound for Shanghai abruptly turned around in circumstances that remain unclear.

Days later, the launch of a much-promoted tourism initiative planned between China and New Zealand was cancelled, purportedly because of scheduling issues for Beijing, despite having been planned for years.

The incidents have raised concerns that New Zealand is the latest target of Beijing's scorn, a worrying prospect for a country that relies on China for NZ\$15.3 billion (\$\$14.2 billion) of its export trade, the most goods that it sends to any country.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Wednesday admitted challenges in her country's relationship with China, but denied those ties were deteriorating.

Her remarks came in response to claims by commentators and her political opponents that New Zealand was experiencing retaliation because it had joined other Western nations in taking a tough stance against Chinese technology company Huawei.

"The perception in Beijing is that New Zealand now has uncharacteristically joined the United States in containing China by trying to contain its technology companies – and they are prepared to retaliate," said Mr David Mahon, a New Zealand businessman who runs investment management firm Mahon China and has lived in Beijing for 34 years. He added that long-time suppliers of fresh New Zealand products to China had already faced "non-tariff impediments" at Chinese ports.

Amid the growing tensions, Huawei has begun an advertising campaign in New Zealand in which it appeals to the public over the government's ban on having it supply technology for the country's fifth-generation, or 5G, mobile data network.

Spark, New Zealand's largest telecommunications provider, announced last November that it would join the ranks of countries blocking the use of Huawei equipment in its 5G roll-out, citing intelligence agency advice that the use of that equipment would present "significant national security risks".

The full-page advertisements, which started running on Wednesday in New Zealand's two largest newspapers, said that 5G without Huawei was "like rugby without New Zealand", referring to the country's domination of the sport internationally.

Analysts suggested the Huawei decision might have prompted the cancellation of the tourism event, as well as Ms Ardern's apparent inability to schedule a visit to China, planned since late last year.

The Huawei ban came as a "shock" to Beijing, said Mr Mahon, adding that New Zealand's reputation as an independent voice on the world stage was being eroded by its alignment with the US over the ban, as well as its tougher language on China's actions in the Pacific and South China Sea.

"Either we have changed our view and we want to be much closer to Washington, or this is a series of misadventures, mistakes and misunderstandings," said Mr Mahon.

Mr Rodney Jones, a New Zealand economist who recently returned to Auckland from Beijing after spending 30 years in Asia, said such concerns were "way overwrought".

"We can overstate the importance of a political relationship," he said, adding that even though Australia had "spent 2018 in the diplomatic doghouse" with Beijing, "exports to China last year grew".

NYTIMES



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Wednesday admitted challenges in her country's relationship with China, but denied that those ties were deteriorating. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

No, you can't have your son's hongbao money, Chinese court rules

BEIJING • The father of a 13-year-old boy has been ordered to return hongbao money given to his son, according to a local court in Guangzhou, in southern China's Guangdong province, on Thursday.

The son, surnamed Su, took his father to court after discovering his bank account, into which he had deposited 3,000 yuan (\$\$600) of hongbao (or red packet) money between 2014 and 2015, had been emptied in March 2016.

The father argued that the money was mostly given by his side of the family.

He said that the boy's mother, whom he had divorced years ago, was taking advantage of a change in custody arrangements to take the money for herself.

The mother was awarded custody of the boy in April 2016 and has lived with him since.

According to the court ruling, red packet money belongs to the recipient regardless of his or her age.

Although parents are entitled to help children manage their money, they are not allowed to spend or use the money without their children's consent.

The court therefore ruled in favour of the son and told the father to return 3,045 yuan, including interest.

Red packet money is usually given in cash by senior members of families to the younger ones during Chinese New Year as a gesture of good luck.

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Growing field of presidential hopefuls vie for Democratic nod

Also looming is prospect of third candidate, who could affect results due to vote splitting

Nirmal Ghosh
US Bureau Chief
In Washington

Standing in minus 8 deg C on the banks of the Mississippi River, with the microphone in front of her encrusted with snow, 58-year-old Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar on Sunday threw her hat into the ring for the 2020 presidential election in an increasingly crowded field of Democrats.

That field includes Senators Cory Booker, Bernie Sanders, Kirsten Gillibrand and Tulsi Gabbard. Former United States vice-president Joe Biden, while not saying outright that he will run, has been speaking in private team meetings as if he is going to, a source said. Pundits said his age, however, may be against him; he will be 78 next year.

Also looming is the prospect of a third candidate, an independent not from the Democrats and Republicans. Mr Howard Schultz, former chief executive officer of Starbucks, is interested. This has evoked memories of elections past in which a third candidate arguably took away just enough votes from one party to spoil its chances against its opposition candidate – what many pundits said could be the key to President Donald Trump winning re-election.

Ms Klobuchar, a lawyer, seen as a moderate in a party which is shifting further to the left, has made universal access to healthcare a key issue. She was the fifth sitting female legislator to announce her candidacy, on the same weekend that two others did.

One of them, Senator Kamala Harris of California, a former attorney, has advocated healthcare as a right, and the abolition of the healthcare insurance industry. Healthcare was a driving issue in the 2018 midterm election that saw the Democratic Party seize a majority in the House; it will be a big part of the 2020 campaign for both parties.

On Monday morning, Ms Harris

created a further mild stir when she said in a radio interview that she had tried marijuana in college. The senator, who is ethnically half Jamaican and half Indian, supports federal legalisation of marijuana, which is currently legal to varying degrees in some states but remains illegal under federal law.

Candidates are reaching out in different ways to establish their styles and define their messages. Senator Elizabeth Warren, 69, also declared her candidacy last Saturday, making workers' rights, fair wages, and access to healthcare her key messages.

But elections are not so much decided by voters who drill down on the issues, as by compelling personalities defining the issues in a way that sustains the interest and support of voters, said Dr Glenn Altschuler, professor of American studies at Cornell University. Mr Trump did just that in 2016.

"We are now into the celebration of politics," he told The Straits Times. "Personality matters."

Some call this the silly season in the US presidential election cycle – marked by trial balloons, a mix of serious, half-serious and non-serious candidates, and the testing of waters in the initially uniquely fratricidal contest that is a feature of the US presidential election system.

Part of the stampede for the Democratic Party nomination has been stimulated by the first people who announced because they were fishing for commitments of support, said Dr Charles Bullock, professor of political science at the University of Georgia. "You need to get your name into the mix as a placeholder," he told The Straits Times.

"There's going to be a big field and part of this is fuelled by Trump's success," he added. "A lot of people with different skill and experience levels are looking at this and saying if Donald Trump can get elected, then anybody can win."

The true wild card will be a third candidate. Independent candidates are highly unlikely to win, given



US Senator Amy Klobuchar waving to supporters after announcing her decision to run in the 2020 presidential election at Boom Island Park. She was the fifth sitting female legislator to announce her candidacy. PHOTO: DPA

America's election system, in which money and machinery – and Electoral College votes – are indispensable.

Yet, in 1992, Texas businessman Ross Perot was blamed by Republicans for leaching votes away from their nominee and incumbent President George H.W. Bush, thus reducing his chances against then Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, who won.

In 2000, it was the turn of the Democratic Party to see victory slip away when lawyer and activist Ralph Nader contested as an independent. He was blamed for diverting votes from Democratic candidate Al Gore, who lost the election narrowly to Mr George W. Bush.

The so-called spoiler effect is much debated; a case can be made that neither Mr Perot nor Mr Nader was responsible for the outcome of those elections. But the worry they may have is enough to create consternation in the Democratic Party

about Mr Schultz's plans.

In a CNN town hall appearance aired on Tuesday night, Mr Schultz said: "The two-party system is broken and based on revenge politics."

But he pledged: "I will not do anything whatsoever to re-elect Donald Trump."

Ideologically, 2020 is shaping up to be a renewed contest between left and right.

"The situation is poised for a conversation on late capitalism, on whether billionaires should be in charge of government," said Dr Jennifer R. Mercieca, associate professor of communications at Texas A&M University.

"The agenda has been set by left-leaning Democrats who won in the midterms," said Dr Mercieca. "That President Trump had to defend capitalism in his State of the Union address last week says a lot."

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How the election process works

Presidential elections begin with a series of primary elections or caucuses held in each state.

In primary elections, party members vote for the candidate they want to run for president. In caucuses, voters choose delegates who back candidates based on the votes they receive.

Popular hopefuls edge out others and look increasingly like viable candidates, gaining more media attention and financial backing.

Parties then hold their national conventions, where they nominate a presidential candidate. He announces his vice-president running mate at the event and begins his general election campaigning across the country.

On Election Day, Americans vote for their president. He is not chosen directly by the people but by electors who form the electoral college.

Each state is allocated a fixed number of electors depending on the size of its population. These electors go on to elect the president according to how their state voted.

A candidate must win at least 270 of these electoral votes to become president. In 2016, candidate Donald Trump won 304 electoral votes while his opponent Hillary Clinton garnered only 227 electoral votes although she won the popular vote.

2020 TIMELINE

Feb 3: Iowa caucuses, where voters will cast the first votes of the election cycle.

Feb 11: New Hampshire primaries, followed by several others later in the month. Primary and caucus season spans February to June.

March 3: Super Tuesday, when the greatest number of states hold their primaries.

July 13-16: Democratic National Convention

Aug 24-27: Republican National Convention

Nov 3: Election Day

Jan 20, 2021: Presidential Inauguration Day

Charissa Yong



Muddy water flowing down the stairs of a home in Sausalito, California during a rain storm. PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESS

Winter storm lashes California, triggering floods and mudslides

CALIFORNIA • Motorists swam for their lives and residents were rescued from homes sliding downhill as the wettest winter storm of the year triggered floods and mudslides across California on Thursday.

In Sausalito, just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, a mudslide carried away two homes and engulfed five cars, sending one woman to the hospital, Southern Marin Fire Department tweeted. Dozens of homes were evacuated in the area.

In Cabazon, about 135km east of Los Angeles, two motorists swam from their vehicle and were rescued by helicopter after their car was engulfed by churning brown floodwaters, a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection spokesman said.

"We've had multiple water rescues throughout the day. I think today our helicopter is up to about a dozen," said CalFire spokesman Richard Cordova. "We haven't seen

rain like this in 10 years."

Three Delta Air Lines passengers suffered minor injuries when severe turbulence shook a flight headed from southern California to Seattle on Wednesday, according to the authorities.

The moisture-rich tropical storm, known as an atmospheric river, has lashed Northern California with rain and snow since late Tuesday. The moisture flow, nicknamed the "Pineapple Express" for its origin near Hawaii, unleashed its full force overnight.

Power lines, trees and car-size boulders littered roads in San Diego County and flash flood warnings were in place after regions like Palomar mountain saw nearly 25cm of rain, according to the National Weather Service (NWS).

To the north, Venado, a town near San Francisco famed for its rainfall, received more than 30cm of precipitation over 48 hours.

Areas particularly at risk were those that suffered deadly wildfires



Southern Marin firefighters searching a home that was swept downhill by a mudslide during a rainstorm in Sausalito, California on Thursday. Fifty homes were evacuated after the mudslide struck homes and sent at least one sliding 70m down a hill. No injuries were reported.

in the last two years, leaving scorched hillsides devoid of vegetation and prone to collapse.

Residents in Northern California's Butte County – where the Camp Fire killed 86 people and destroyed nearly 19,000 structures

last year – were told to leave their homes over concerns a creek could overflow and flood communities.

Hundreds of people in Lake Elsinore, 90km east of Los Angeles, got mandatory evacuation orders on fears hillsides scorched by the 2018

Holy Fire could turn into debris flows.

To the north, Redding, the town devastated by the Carr Fire in 2018, was hit with around 36cm of snow that shut down Interstate 5 south of the Oregon border and knocked out

power to thousands of customers.

A couple more feet of snow were expected to fall in the Sierra Nevada mountains of northern California to Friday, said NWS meteorologist Hannah Chandler-Cooley in Sacramento. REUTERS

May suffers another blow as MPs reject Brexit plan

Tory hardliners abstain from vote even as PM presses on to renegotiate deal with EU

LONDON • Prime Minister Theresa May has suffered a defeat on her Brexit strategy that undermined her pledge to European Union leaders to get her divorce deal approved if they grant her concessions. In a show of muscle, hardline Brexit supporters in her Conservative Party on Thursday decided to abstain, handing her an embarrassing, albeit symbolic, defeat as she tries to renegotiate her deal with

the EU. While it will not deter Mrs May from trying to secure changes on the most contentious issue of the deal – the Irish “backstop” – the vote does show that her pro-Brexit lawmakers are a major obstacle to passing any agreement. Mrs May was absent from the House of Commons for the debate and the outcome of the vote, which deepened the sense of political crisis over Britain’s departure more

than two years after voters opted to leave the bloc by a margin of 52 per cent to 48 per cent. The crunch vote is now expected to come on Feb 27, when Mrs May is due to return to Parliament – and lawmakers who fear leaving without a deal could try to seize control of Britain’s departure from the EU. The latest twist in the two-year negotiation to leave the EU underlines the rifts in Parliament over

how, or even whether, Britain should leave the bloc, its biggest political and trade policy shift in more than 40 years. It increases the possibility of Britain leaving without a deal, a nightmare scenario for many businesses, but also of Brexit being delayed or potentially never happening at all. Mrs May’s spokesman said she still believed Parliament wanted her to keep pressing for changes to

the Brexit deal. “The government will continue to pursue this with the EU to ensure we leave on time on 29 March,” said the spokesman. EU leaders, meanwhile, have repeatedly said there can be no substantive change to the legally binding withdrawal agreement containing the backstop, a guarantee that there can be no return of border controls between the British province of Northern Ireland and EU

member Ireland. With trust in the Prime Minister at an all-time low, one Conservative pro-Brexit lawmaker said the government could no longer ignore eurosceptics’ views. “While the vote might not be of substantive importance, what it does do is to tell the government that they really can’t take Brexiteers for granted,” the lawmaker said on condition of anonymity. With many Conservative lawmakers abstaining, the government defeat on its motion reaffirming support for Mrs May’s strategy was a heavy one, at 303 votes to 258. The pro-Brexit European Research Group (ERG), several dozen strong, had said it would defy Mrs May unless she dispelled its concern that she might after all balk at a no-deal exit. Ministers were keen to shrug off the defeat. “The fact that ERG colleagues abstain is sending a message that they still want to find a way forward and find a solution,” said Mr Robert Buckland, the Solicitor-General. Both Britain’s minister for Brexit Stephen Barclay and opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn will visit Brussels next week for talks with EU negotiator Michel Barnier, said an EU spokesman, who confirmed that Mr Barclay was expected to visit EU headquarters on Monday and Mr Corbyn on Thursday. REUTERS, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



MPs in the House of Commons after Thursday's vote on Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit strategy. The government's motion reaffirming support for Mrs May's strategy was defeated at 303 votes to 258. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

Catalan crisis forces early polls in Spain

MADRID • Spain’s socialist Prime Minister yesterday called early elections for April 28, the third in less than four years, after his draft Budget was rejected in Parliament over the Catalan secession crisis. “Between two options – not doing anything and continuing without a Budget, or...giving Spaniards their say – I choose the second,” Mr Pedro Sanchez told reporters. Opinion polls suggest one outcome of the snap election could be a right-wing majority in Parliament, including a newly emerged far-right party. The campaign will focus on the hot-button issue of the secession crisis in Catalonia, with the right wing furious at Mr Sanchez’s attempts to negotiate with the region’s separatist executive, accusing him of yielding to their demands to stay in power. Mr Sanchez took power just over eight months ago after he ousted his conservative rival in a dramatic parliamentary no-confidence vote. At the head of a fragile minority government, the 46-year-old had to rely on the support of unlikely bedfellows in Parliament, including the far-left Podemos party, Basque nationalist lawmakers and – crucially – 17 Catalan separatist MPs. On Wednesday, Catalan MPs joined right-wing lawmakers in rejecting his Budget. They withdrew their backing in protest at separatist leaders being tried for their role in a 2017 attempt to break Catalonia from Spain, and for not being able to hold a legal independence referendum. Even before Mr Sanchez’s announcement, the socialists had already taken a campaign-like tone, accusing Catalan separatists and conservatives of blocking a Budget that included social-spending measures after years of austerity. Yesterday, Mr Sanchez blasted the “blocking of a social Budget after seven years of social injustice, austerity and spending cuts”. He highlighted his government’s track record – from a 22 per cent rise in the minimum wage to fighting against energy poverty. He also insisted that talks were the way forward to try to ease the Catalan crisis. “We’re willing to talk and find a solution within the limits of the Constitution and the law,” Mr Sanchez said. Opposition leader Pablo Casado, appearing in front of a large Spanish flag at the headquarters of his conservative Popular Party (PP) in Madrid, said triumphantly: “We’ve toppled Sanchez’s government.” The 38-year-old said the election would be about “deciding if Spain continues to be hostage to those parties that want to destroy it... or a PP leadership that can broker deals with other political groupings to stop the separatist challenge”. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



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SCIENCE

Seven quantum technology projects awarded grants

They aim to develop capabilities needed for industrial application

Cheryl Teh

With quantum technology, space exploration is possible, satellite television works and Google Maps help take us home.

This technology is both hardware and software. It includes superfast chips that can, in seconds, crunch data that would take a traditional computer thousands of years. And hardware – like atomic clocks, which measure time according to vibrations within atoms – that scientists are now attempting to make absolutely accurate.

The importance of this area of research has been further recognised locally, as the National Research Foundation (NRF) last week awarded seven projects grants under the national Quantum Engineering Programme (QEP).

The projects all aim to develop the engineering capabilities needed to commercialise quantum technologies for industrial application.

The QEP, which is managed by the National University of Singapore (NUS), will allow for quantum tech – the science of the very small – to be

explored further locally.

One of the grant winners was Assistant Professor Charles Lim, from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at NUS. His project will include hardware for quantum encryption: making faster miniature, cost-effective chips that may be used in smartphones.

These chips might, with the principles of quantum technology, allow for phones that cannot be hacked, and for person-to-person conversations to be made fully encrypted and secure. Modern quantum technology has its roots in the work of renowned physicists Paul Benioff, Yuri Manin, Richard Feynman and David Deutsch. It is a field of physics which explains how matter behaves at the atomic and sub-atomic level.

Superposition, a characteristic of quantum computing, is the idea that a particle can be in two places and states at the same time. This allows quantum computers, unlike binary computers that use either binary codes 1 or 0, to use qubits – which can be a 1, and a 0, simultaneously.

This duality in a qubit allows for quantum computers (which exist today) to hold vast amounts of information in a smaller space. Separately, the effect of “entanglement” is a phenomenon where objects can remain connected by a quantum state, though they may be physically

Building Solutions

We are confident that these research projects under the Quantum Engineering Programme will allow Singapore to build engineering solutions and systems to strengthen our expertise and competitive edge in the global market for quantum devices and applications.

“

MR GEORGE LOH, programmes director of the National Research Foundation, on the seven projects awarded grants.

apart by a distance. This property has led to atomic clocks, for absolutely precise timings to be used in telecommunications, the banking industry, space communication and radar technology.

But knowledge and inventions in quantum technology are useful in other ways. For example, to prevent security breaches, said Professor Peter Knight, physicist and professor of quantum optics at Imperial College London. “We have learnt to trust entirely the encryption techniques used now, and relying on encryption invented 30 to 40 years ago,” Prof Knight said.

“What is computationally hard changes, and becomes dead easy with a quantum computer – decrypting information that could have taken thousands of years can take seconds now, and everything might be at risk if an adversary has a quantum computer,” Prof Knight said.

So while a quantum computer can decrypt any organisation’s trade secrets, confidential communication, and sensitive data, he added that a more secure, quantum-based communications network can combat this infiltration. He said that new research is being developed – to “see” changes in the links between quantum particles, and detect if someone is trying to intercept communications. This will help to create secure

systems, on an unsecure device.

Work is being done in other areas as well.

Dr Charles Altuzarra at the Institute for Quantum Science and Engineering at Texas A&M University in the United States has developed an experiment that could enhance quantum information and cryptography, by manipulating quantum light particles.

The projects under the QEP plan to take quantum research a step further. Mr George Loh, programmes director of NRF, said: “The seven newly awarded research projects are significant as they signify Singapore’s ambition to develop quantum devices and applications for commercial use.”

“We are confident that these research projects under the Quantum Engineering Programme will allow Singapore to build engineering solutions and systems to strengthen our expertise and competitive edge in the global market for quantum devices and applications,” he added.

The projects were chosen from 18 white papers submitted from July last year, and evaluated by an international panel that awarded the grants based on the projects’ quality, and relevance to Singapore.

Prof Lim’s work involves quantum key distribution, a cryptographic method enabling two parties to produce a wholly unique, random, and shared secret key, that can be used to encrypt and decrypt messages.

“Our proposal is to develop a scalable, robust, and efficient quantum key distribution (QKD) network technology,” said Prof Lim.

“The team aims to deliver two QKD prototypes together with chip-based quantum technologies for quantum networks over the next five years,” he added.

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Beautiful Science



Goodbye Opportunity. One of the most successful and enduring feats of interplanetary exploration, Nasa’s Opportunity rover mission is at an end after almost 15 years exploring the surface of Mars. The robot – missing since the space agency lost contact with it during a severe planet-wide dust storm in June last year, was declared officially dead on Wednesday. After more than a thousand commands to restore contact, engineers in the Space Flight Operations Facility at Nasa’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) made their last attempt to revive Opportunity on Tuesday, to no avail. Designed to last just 90 Martian days and travel 1km, Opportunity vastly exceeded all expectations in its endurance, scientific value and longevity, said Nasa. In addition to exceeding its life expectancy by 60 times, the 174kg rover had travelled more than 45km by the time it reached its most appropriate final resting spot on Mars – Perseverance Valley. During its journey, it discovered definitive proof of liquid water on ancient Mars and returned more than 217,000 images. This self-portrait of Opportunity, courtesy of the Sun and the rover’s front hazard-avoidance camera, was taken as it moved farther into the “Endurance Crater” in the Meridiani Planum region of the Red Planet on July 26, 2004. “I cannot think of a more appropriate place for Opportunity to endure on the surface of Mars than one called Perseverance Valley,” said Dr Michael Watkins, director of JPL. “The records, discoveries and sheer tenacity of this intrepid little rover is testament to the ingenuity, dedication, and perseverance of the people who built and guided her.” PHOTO: NASA/JPL-CALTECH

Scientists develop AI to predict and engineer material properties

Scientists have developed a machine learning approach that can predict the effects of strain on the properties of materials, paving the way for new developments in communications, information processing and energy.

The research was done by Nanyang Technological University (NTU), together with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Russia’s Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology.

When a semiconductor material is bent or strained, the atoms in its structure are perturbed, changing its properties such as how it conducts electricity, heat or light transmission.

NTU president Professor Subra Suresh, a senior author of the study, said the new method made it possible to calculate the almost infinite number of potential combinations of material strain. “Now we have this reasonably accurate method that drastically reduces the complexity of the calculations needed,” he said.

“Our research is an illustration of how recent advances in seemingly distant fields such as material physics, artificial intelligence, computing and machine learning can be brought together to advance scientific knowledge that has strong implications for industry application.”

In a paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences this week, the authors demonstrated their use of artificial intelligence to identify the most energy-efficient strain pathways that could transform diamond into more effective semiconductors.

Last year, the NTU and MIT authors reported in the journal Science that diamond nanoneedles could be bent and stretched as much as 9 per cent, which was surprising given that diamond is the hardest known natural material.

And in earlier research with industrial applications, “strain engineering” was used on silicon processor chips, where a one per cent strain allowed electrons to move faster, resulting in up to 50 per cent higher processing speeds.

In the latest study, the team examined the effects of strain on the bandgap, a key electronic property of semiconductors, in both silicon and diamond. Using their neural network algorithm, they predicted how different amounts and orientations of strain would affect the bandgap.

Being able to tune the bandgap could improve the efficiency of semiconductor materials such as a silicon solar cell, increasing the energy harnessed from light while making it a thousand times thinner, thus reducing the cost needed for materials, transportation and infrastructure, said NTU in a statement.

Diamond has shown great potential as a semiconductor material ideal for high-frequency devices such as radios in satellite communication and power electronics used for mobile networks and electrical power grids, it added.

PUSHING THE LIMITS

Our research is an illustration of how recent advances in seemingly distant fields such as material physics, artificial intelligence, computing and machine learning can be brought together to advance scientific knowledge that has strong implications for industry application.

“

NTU PRESIDENT PROFESSOR SUBRA SURESH, describing the intersection of multiple scientific disciplines in the study.



A male and female flamingo will build a nest, incubate a single egg and, when it hatches, churn out the rich milk on which the chick will feed for nine months. The parents spike the milk with carotenoid pigments which have antioxidants – ideal for promoting a chick's health and rapid growth. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Breast-free animals make milk for their young too

Lactation arose not just to feed babies, but to facilitate egg-laying on dry land: Researchers

Most female flies take a low-rent approach to parenthood, depositing scores of seed-sized eggs in the trash or on pet scat to hatch, leaving the larvae to fend for themselves.

Not so the female tsetse fly. She gestates her young internally, one at a time, and gives birth to them live. When each pampered offspring pulls free of her uterus after nine days, mother and child are pretty much the same size.

"It's the equivalent of giving birth to an 18-year-old," said entomologist Geoffrey Attardo, who studies tsetse flies at the University of California, Davis.

The newborn looks like a hand grenade and moves like a Slinky, and if you squeeze it too hard, the source of its plumpness becomes clear – or rather a telltale white. The larva, it seems, is just a big bag of milk.

"Rupture the gut and the milk comes spilling out," Mr Attardo said. And milk it truly is – a nutritional, biochemical and immunological designer fluid that the mother

fly's body has spun from her blood meals and pumped into her uterus, where her young gulped it down.

Thus fattened, on maternal largesse, a tsetse fly larva can safely burrow underground and pupate for 30 days before emerging as a full-blown adult with a nasty bite and the capacity to transmit a deadly disease called sleeping sickness.

In a recent chemical and genetic analysis of tsetse fly milk, Mr Attardo and his colleagues were startled to discover how similar it was to the product of the beloved gland that stamps humans as mammals.

"I was expecting something completely off the wall and different," he said. "But there are frightening, fascinating overlaps with mammalian milk in the kinds of proteins we see."

The new tsetse fly research is just one example of scientists widening the ranks of adherents to nature's Milky Way.

Researchers have recently found the equivalent of mother's milk in an array of unexpected, breast-free places – in spiders, cockroaches

and burying beetles; in great white sharks, male emperor penguins and flamingos of both sexes.

Other scientists have traced the evolution of mammalian lactation and concluded that it arose not as a convenient way to feed a baby, but to help our egg-laying ancestors tackle the challenge of water management on dry land.

Still other scientists are seeking to tally and understand the compositional differences in the milks from a broad sample of the world's 5,500 or so mammals.

They have unearthed a number of compelling concordances between the demands of oddball mammals and the makeup of their milk.

Assaying the milk of the nine-banded armadillo, for example, Mr Michael Power, a lactation researcher at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park in Washington, and his colleagues were impressed by the high levels of calcium and phosphorus they detected, and by the even greater concentrations of protein.

The researchers realised it was a matter of chemistry. If you simply dropped large quantities of calcium and phosphorus into most types of mammalian milk, the minerals would stick together into insoluble

phosphate compounds.

"They'd get stuck in the mammary gland and never reach the baby," Mr Power said. The solution? Throw in extra doses of casein proteins to bind the minerals into compact, usable nano-clusters.

"If I'm going to have a high-calcium, high-phosphorus milk, I have to have a high-protein milk because a lot of that protein is a calcium-phosphorus delivery device," he added.

EXPENSIVE LACTATION

Biologists warn against the wanton use of the word milk and some mammalogists want to restrict the term to the secretions of a dedicated mammary gland, which only their study subjects happen to possess.

But many scientists concur that if a parent synthesises or highly modifies a substance on which its offspring's life then depends, that parent is making a milk. By this measure, predigested food alone may not count, but if the parent first adds essential ingredients to the bolus, the regurgitate can fairly be deemed a milk.

Ms Sandra Steiger of the University of Bayreuth in Germany and her colleagues reported on an American species, *Nicrophorus orbicollis* – an inch-long burying beetle with orange and black stripes. Both parents care for their young.

A parent beetle will eat a bit of carrion, predigest it and, on being tapped on the mouth by an offspring's front legs, transfer the morsel into the supplicant's mouth.

"It's like kiss-feeding," Ms Steiger said. But as the researchers demonstrated, there is more to the osculatory exchange than pulped meat – the parent's oral fluids are also critical to the young beetle's survival.

Ms Steiger's team showed that if they presented larval beetles with liquefied mice carrion, the little insects could feed themselves just fine, but nearly all of them died

before reaching pupation.

Only when the scientists stirred parental oral fluids into the mix did the young beetles thrive.

The researchers have yet to analyse this chocolate-coloured beetle milk, but Ms Steiger suspects it supplies the larvae with gut micro-organisms, antibodies, digestive enzymes and other must-haves for mulching cadavers.

Wherever it appears, lactation is expensive and demands evolutionary justification. Flamingos are among the few birds that make milk for their young and the effort drains them of all colour – but at least it is an egalitarian affair.

A male and female will jointly build a nest, incubate a single large egg and, when the egg hatches, churn out the rich crop milk on which the flamingo chick will feed for nine long months.

Begging calls from the chick stimulate in the parent's brain the release of prolactin – the same hormone that subserves human lactation – which in turn prompts cells lining the crop, at the base of the parental throat, to swell and secrete the magic formula.

Brimming with protein and fatter than mammalian milk, flamingo milk "has the consistency of cottage cheese", said Mr Paul Rose, a flamingo researcher at the University of Exeter in Britain.

It is also bright pink. The parents spike the milk with the same carotenoid pigments that normally tint a flamingo's feathers and that happen to be antioxidants – ideal for promoting a chick's health and rapid growth.

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The ancestors of modern mammals are thought to have laid the sort of porous, parchment-shelled eggs seen today among lizards, snakes and a couple of monotreme mammals like the platypus.

In contrast to the hard-shelled calcified eggs of birds, parchment eggs are at chronic risk of drying out, which means modern snakes and lizards often are constrained by the need to lay their eggs in a relatively damp setting.

Our ancient forebears stumbled on a solution: Make yourself into a watering can and you can lay your eggs wherever you want.

"The likely first function of milk was to hydrate parchment-shelled eggs laid on dry ground," said Ms Amy Skibieli of the University of Idaho, an expert in mammalian lactation. By this scenario, pre-mammals dribbled fluid onto their eggs through pores on their chest; nipples came much later.

Parchment eggs also are at risk of microbial infiltration and genetic studies suggest that the earliest egg hydration solutions were fortified with anti-pathogen components.

Why not continue with the watering post-hatch, souping up the fluids, through natural selection, into food for the babies?

Once the mammalian lineage had settled on the secretory approach to parenthood, milk quickly diversified, the recipes dictated by a combination of need, diet and who your relatives were.

Hooded seal pups nurse on rapidly shrinking ice floes for just four days and in that time, they manage to double their weight. Not surprisingly, hooded seal milk is more than 60 per cent fat – the fattiest milk among mammals.

It also smells overwhelmingly of fish. On the other end of the lipid scale, rhinoceros milk, at 2 per cent fat, looks and smells like skim milk.

Elephant milk is less watery and I was sure I caught notes of ice cream. Lion's milk has no discernible odour and, like most carnivore milk, is low in sugars; meat-eaters are designed to wrest their glucose from protein and fat.

Human milk, in contrast, is extremely sweet. Ms Skibieli, who tasted her own milk while nursing her baby, said it reminded her of cantaloupe.

The number and variety of sugars in human milk outstrips that seen in any other great ape, Mr Power said, and he proposes a surprising reason for that bounty – not to build our big brain, as some have argued, but because humans needed sugar's anti-microbial powers to help us cope with all the novel pathogens we encountered after the Agricultural Revolution, when we started crowding into villages and living in close quarters with other animals.

Mr Power said: "Our ability to use animals in lots of different ways is one of the reasons we're successful, but it was a huge shock to the system".

Luckily, our milk rose to the challenge. "Our brain made our milk, not the other way around," he added. NYTIMES

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The Straits Times says

Tough judgment call had to be made

Parliament provided the forum this week for answers to questions that had been left hanging uncomfortably in the public mind over the Ministry of Health's (MOH) handling of the leak of data of HIV-positive individuals here. Members of Parliament, reflecting rumblings on the ground that had also been articulated in this newspaper and other media, subjected the episode to deserved scrutiny. One feature of public discussion was the question of why the ministry chose to reveal the leak only now, when it appears to have been made aware of breaches on two earlier occasions. Consequently, accusations of a cover-up spread on social media, with the potential of undermining public confidence.

The crux of the Government's response in Parliament is that public disclosure of the matter was a judgment call balancing the need to be transparent with how it would affect those affected. The call, in this case, had to weigh those two competing outcomes. Transparency meant involving all of society in fighting a particular intrusion into its laws and mores. Earlier disclosure by the MOH might have achieved this objective by signalling to the transgressor – an American deported last year after having served a jail term for fraud and drug-related offences – that his actions would not be able to disturb the established patterns and rhythms of society here. In that case, the Government's judgment call should have been different.

However, the competing consideration – protection of privacy – was no less important. HIV is a virus and being affected by it is not a crime. But its imagined association with moral lassitude has, unfortunately, become ingrained in parts of the public's imagination – at least among those who are uninformed. This is why, unlike even cancer and other dreaded diseases which sufferers acknowledge without fear of social opprobrium, those afflicted with HIV try to shield their condition from even their own families, to say nothing of friends and employers. Any official act that would have reduced their anonymity would have been an assault on their privacy in the most egregious of ways.

In the circumstances, disclosure would have been premature without waiting to see where the leak was headed. Going public became an obligation only when it was clear that there was no way ahead without bringing the whole incident into the public domain. This, the Government has done. In the aftermath of this most unfortunate incident, the authorities need to buttress institutional defences, both technological and human, against leaks that threaten to destroy the privacy accorded to personal information in Government hands. Singaporeans should forge a less judgmental society in which vulnerable groups, such as HIV sufferers, would not be devastated by disclosure.

By Invitation

How to take feedback seriously

Public responses to incidents are a valuable source of feedback. While negative feedback may cause discomfort, it is important for policymakers to learn to process and respond better to such views.

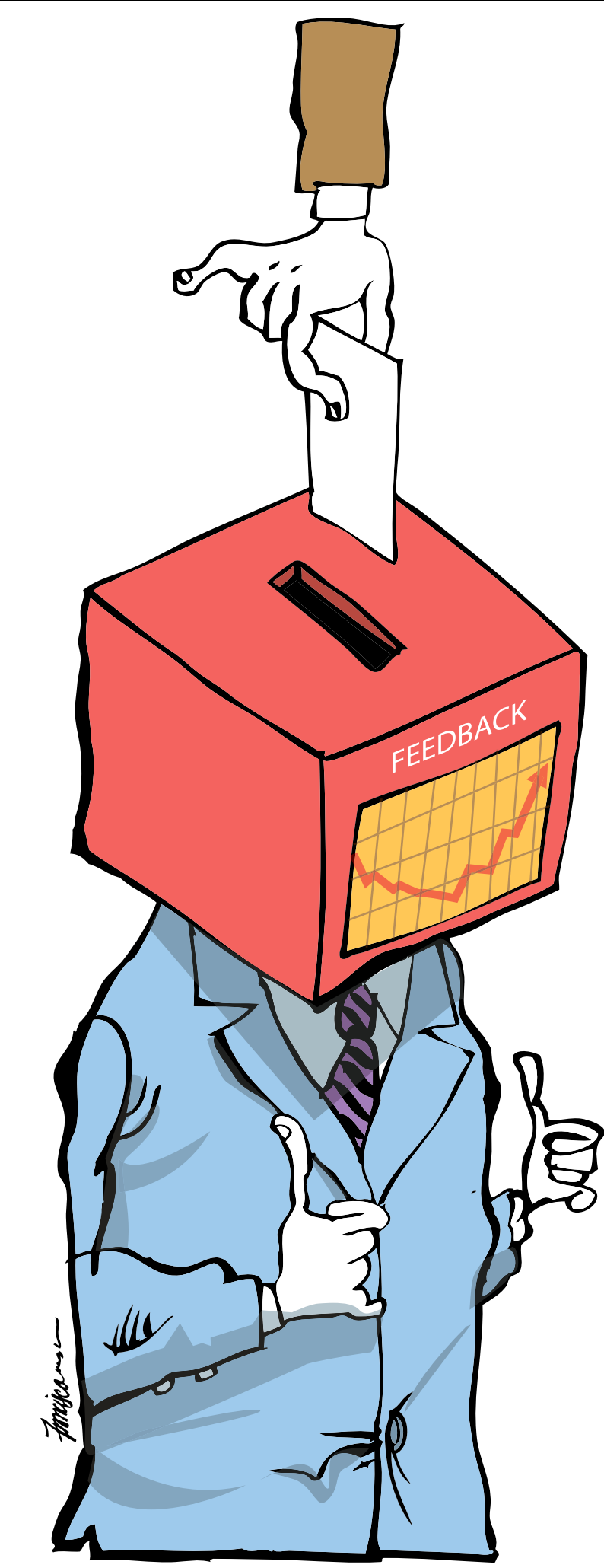


David Chan

For The Straits Times

It is a common practice these days for people to assess or react to a product they buy, a service they receive, or performance or activity they took part in. Giving feedback has become very much a way of life. Feedback is not restricted to customer service or performance appraisal situations. It can also refer to public reactions to an incident, expressed as evaluations, emotions and concerns. People may have views on an incident, and also how they perceive the incident was handled or is being handled. Some recent cases come to mind – such as national servicemen training deaths, the SingHealth cyber attack and the HIV Registry data leak. Public expressions on these matters are valuable feedback that reflects and reveals much. They are unsolicited real-life reactions to actual specific incidents and how they are handled. We hear the reactions in informal conversations. We read the public comments written in mainstream media and posted on social media, with a mix of reflective and visceral reactions. A noteworthy commentary is a recent editorial in the local Chinese daily Lianhe Zaobao that raised serious questions of leadership complacency, accountability and public trust in Government. The commentary, together with others, elicited a response from Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat last Saturday, published in both Lianhe Zaobao and The Straits Times. Mr Heng stated that the Singapore Government has not “gone slack”, such as becoming complacent and failing to hold senior people accountable when things went wrong. He reiterated that its leaders “will not flinch from taking a hard look at ourselves each time there is a

failure, and doing whatever is necessary to put things right”. **SOLDIER DEATHS, DATA LEAK** Earlier this week in Parliament, Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen and Health Minister Gan Kim Yong responded to questions on the recent soldier training deaths and the HIV data leak, respectively. The ministers provided some additional details to what were already made known to the public since the news broke. The critical information on how the training deaths of the two national servicemen (Liu Kai last November and Aloysius Pang in January) occurred, and why, are currently not known. Hopefully, the two committees of inquiry will provide thorough and clear answers, and soon. For the HIV data leak, we can expect differences in views among the public on the Health Ministry's “judgment call” in decisions and actions on when and what to tell who, with regard to the data leak. The ministry's statements also spark debate on the security of personal data the public entrusted to the Government. It also raises the issue of HIV and the stigma around it, which influenced decisions on whether to inform the individuals affected and the general public of a data leak. Some will continue to have questions on how the event unfolded, the coordination among government agencies involved and their interactions and investigations with the two individuals in the centre of the data leak – American Mikhy Farrera Brochez and Singaporean Ler Teck Siang. The HIV data leak incident is still evolving, with fresh information to emerge, and possible further public exposure of the leaked data. Also, not all of the affected individuals have been informed that their personal data was leaked. Public reactions to the soldier deaths and data leak incident will continue. And they may become more negative or positive. The Government and its related agencies will have to decide how to respond to the evolving reactions to these recent adverse incidents, and future ones. Will the impending



government-public interactions make things better or worse? It is useful to take a hard look at the feedback process applicable to previous and future exchanges. **MALADAPTIVE RESPONSES TO NEGATIVE FEEDBACK** If we misconstrue valid negative feedback and dismiss it as ignorant or malicious, we will fail to identify our mistakes to take remedial action. We will be positively reinforced to reiterate and repeat our maladaptive actions. It will also create unnecessary ambivalence or distrust in the relationship with the feedback givers. We will also miss out potentially good ideas and solutions that can arise from addressing the issues associated with the negative

feedback. The consequence is a rapid spiral of negative outcomes. The first human reaction to negative feedback is unpleasant emotions such as anger and disappointment. This is followed quickly by defensive responses to justify our actions or inactions. For example, when making sense of our failures, we often attribute too little weight to ourselves and too much weight to external factors such as the situation and the behaviours of others. Our defensive responses often include recounting the many good things we have done. We end up citing many things that, while good, are irrelevant to the negative feedback given. Sometimes we are not defensive, but our initially sensible response becomes maladaptive when

overdone or not well communicated. It is true that everyone has a part to play in enhancing a positive climate for safety in military training and a societal culture of non-discrimination in treatment of people with HIV. But if we overemphasise collective responsibility or highlight it when the critical issue is something else, we will be perceived as attempting to detract or shift blame. We end up giving the public impression that we are actually saying “It's your fault too” or “It's your fault”. Another sensible response that can go wrong is emphasising that no system is perfect. The reminder is appropriate if the negative feedback stems from an unrealistic expectation that there must be zero errors. But the emphasis backfires when the negative feedback comes about because of a series of similar or seemingly related errors. The overemphasis occurs when we fail to appreciate how public expectations evolve and how this relates to negative public reactions. It is a myth to believe that people expect everything to be perfect and have zero tolerance for any mistakes. People form expectations partly based on what they have experienced routinely. When unmet expectations upset people, it is often because their routine standards are frustrated – not because the standards did not achieve a perfect score. They react when lapses have personal consequences or severe outcomes that they can see affecting themselves, others or society. Attempting to moderate public expectations or address unmet expectations by emphasising that perfection is impossible, or that human lapses do occur, misses the point. In fact, trying to do so will only lead to perceptions that the Government is lacking in empathy, disconnected from ground sentiments or trying to shift the blame to alleged public irrationality. What seems like a sensible response becomes maladaptive when we say the right thing at the wrong time or in the wrong way.

TAKING FEEDBACK SERIOUSLY How then to respond adaptively when people give us negative feedback? I suggest 11 basic principles.

- Spend less time listening to people who give you only positive feedback or agree with you on everything. This creates delusion of positivity and maladaptive responses to valuable negative feedback.
- Be honestly humble and seek more feedback from those who do not have similar background or views as you. Be open to the possibility that your view, conclusion or position may be mistaken.
- Understand that it is human to experience unpleasant emotions when the feedback is negative, but don't let the emotions affect your responses.
- Don't be defensive. It is not necessary to recount all the good things – it backfires when they are irrelevant to the core concerns in the feedback.
- Don't be patronising. People are not irrational and unrealistic in their expectations. Understand how recent incidents and related

- observations may have led to unmet expectations.
- Don't jump to conclusions. Ask people to elaborate on their negative feedback, which may reveal additional important feedback or misunderstanding of facts from the individual giving or receiving the feedback.
 - Understand the emotions and experiences of the people involved including those providing the feedback. Learn to see things from their perspectives.
 - Be transparent and accountable. Provide an honest and full account of what actually happened and how it happened. Explain and justify the actual considerations that went into the decisions made. Hold the right individuals responsible for their deeds and decisions. This must be done without fear or favour, both actual and perceived.
 - Reinforce the value of integrity and position on zero tolerance for wrongdoings. Demonstrate with action, and not just give words of assurance that there is will to correct mistakes and get things right.
 - Be prompt in responding. Lengthy delays and releasing information in a piecemeal fashion and at different times with no clear reasons will fuel cynicism. Preliminary statements or accounts may be useful, but they should not come across as attempts to influence fact-finding and bias conclusions.
 - Revise and adapt your responses in the light of reasonable feedback and new information that are credible and critical.

BECOMING BETTER

We may say the above principles are obvious, and some leaders are already explicitly espousing one or more of these principles in public engagement. Yet, most of us don't practise them enough, well enough, or at all. We may even be repeatedly acting in maladaptive ways that go against these principles. Advocating but not practising effective responses, plus repeated inadequacies, add to the angst and disappointment experienced by those who give feedback when they see that the feedback does not work. This is most unfortunate, especially when people at both ends of the feedback share the common goal of achieving better performance and outcomes in future. So we need to learn to self-reflect. Be honest and humble. Be clear, courageous and constructive when responding to feedback. Take concrete corrective actions responsibly, and with accountability. We can prevent many inadequacies in feedback response and their unintended negative consequences. Adopt a principled approach to feedback response so that things become better – preventable adverse incidents will occur less frequently and we can co-create solutions to problems. As people continue to give feedback, they may learn how to deliver it more effectively. Meanwhile, we need to take the feedback given seriously.

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Field notes



Above: Celebrity chef Chan Tak Po is modernising the cha chaan teng business. Customers at his outlets use mobile phones to place orders and pay for meals. Right: Mon Kee Cafe opened in late 2016 in Wan Chai and became a hit with the working crowd. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CHAN TAK PO, MON KEE CAFE



Above: Tsui Wah is one of the more popular cha chaan teng in Hong Kong. Below: The name Capital Cafe, more widely known as Wah Sing Bing Suut, is a nod to recording company Capital Artists Music that was popular in the 1970s and 1980s. ST PHOTOS: CLAIRE HUANG



Mon Kee Cafe co-founder Kelvin Mak in front of the Tsim Sha Tsui outlet, one of the chain's five outlets. The chain is known for its scrambled egg on rice. PHOTO: MON KEE CAFE

Hong Kong's teahouses: Will they be toast soon?

Cha chaan teng sprang up to meet the needs of post-war industrial workers. They are still popular today, but have to adapt to meet new demands of millennials

Claire Huang
Hong Kong Correspondent

The ubiquitous Hong Kong-style teahouse, or what is known as cha chaan teng, was born out of a mishmash of practicality, colonial-era nostalgia – and pure and simple need.

The blend of Eastern and Western cultures is what set the foundation for catapulting these eateries to become a city icon. Indeed, a trip to a cha chaan teng is a “must-do” for visitors.

Time seems to have frozen in the 1960s or 70s in these old-school teahouses, where menus are written in traditional Chinese characters on walls, and worn-out tables and stools or booth seats cover colourful mismatched tiles.

At these teahouses, which are similar to the neighbourhood kopitiam in Singapore, diners sip on milk tea (sometimes filtered through stockings for extra oomph), and tuck into hybrid dishes like pork chop and rice or instant noodle soup topped with slices of luncheon meat. Other treats include french toast or bo lo bao – a bun with a crumbly topping.

Look closer, and you will find what may seem like Singaporean, Malaysian or Indian influences on the menus, including Hainan chicken rice, satay, stir-fry Sinchow bee hoon and curry noodles.

So why are these dishes of South-east and South Asian lineages on the menus of Hong Kong cha chaan teng?

Hong Kong celebrity chef Chan Tak Po, 61, said Hong Kong, being an entrepot and a former British colony, was a cultural melting pot that helped create fresh takes on food. “Why do cha chaan teng have satay? The dish travelled through the region with the movement of people,” he told The Straits Times.

“Hainan chicken rice in Hong Kong is not the same as Hainanese chicken rice. Singapore and Malaysia used to be called Nanyang, which literally means south of the sea, and the dish was brought back to Hong Kong, hence the name.”

As for the Sinchow bee hoon, the star chef said it is a Hong Kong creation combining Singapore curry with Hong Kong’s noodles. “Only with the three key dishes – satay, Hainan chicken rice and curry – can an eatery claim to have South-east Asian food,” Mr Chan added.

HOW THEY CAME TO LIFE

Their humble roots can be traced back to the 1940s and 1950s, a period of industrialisation after World War II. The rise of the manufacturing sector lured locals away from home to take up jobs in factories.

Low wages and long hours meant daily meals had to be cheap and quick. Western restaurants were considered posh and were out of the reach of most of the Chinese population. This left workers with either street food stalls or *dai pai dong*.

“In the olden days, especially when the British were here, it was almost impossible for locals to go into restaurants. They couldn’t afford it and weren’t welcome in many ways unless they were high up in society. But people wanted to try these foods, so they made this mock version of Western foods,” said Mr Sandeep Hathiramani, 31, who despite his Indian name, is born and bred in Hong Kong and runs a bar under Proof & Company. He frequents cha chaan teng on a weekly basis and loves the milk tea, french toast, fried rice and sweet and sour pork.

Back then, there were generally two types of cafes – one that served full meals and the other that only offered limited drinks and snacks such as tea, toast and sandwiches.

“The two (types) eventually merged and cha chaan teng as we know them today were pretty much moulded into shape during the 1970s,” said Hong Konger Derek Choi, an investor in a popular cha chaan teng chain Mon Kee Cafe.

He said based on local research, the first fully licensed cha chaan teng on record was Yu Lei Tai Cha Chaan Teng in Aberdeen in 1960, while the popular Lan Fong Yuen started as a *dai pai dong* in 1952 in Central.

In the 1980s, there was a sharp decline in cha chaan teng as fast-food chains took the city by storm. Then came 1997, when Hong Kong was handed back to China by the British. It was then that the cha chaan teng made a comeback, said Mr Choi, 50, adding that innovators injected new elements.

“Modern decor, comfortable seating and new menu items changed the perception of cha chaan teng forever. It’s no longer a place where you go because it is cheap and just (for you) to fill up the stomach.”

The camaraderie between the owners and their regulars is representative of the old Hong Kong – where ordinary folk worked hard to eke out a living. Bartender David Yeung, 30, is fond of this culture. He recalled a time when he needed to get HK\$500 (S\$86.40) worth of small change for work urgently and



Cha chaan tengs face uncertain future

SCAN TO WATCH

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<http://str.sg/teahouse>

the teahouse he frequents saved the day: “People at a cha chaan teng can be more direct and brutish, but you can build up a rapport and they will go out of their way to help you.”

For Mr Hathiramani, cha chaan teng are endearing because of the familiarity. “There’s a reason I still go to the older restaurants – I know the same woman and I’ve seen their kids grow up. I recognise them and they recognise me, you build that connection,” he explained.

Familiarity does not always breed contempt, at least not for Mr Yeung, who spent part of his childhood in Hong Kong. He describes cha chaan teng as quintessential gathering places for people from all walks of life, where diners are united under one roof with affordable “super simple fare” that never changes.

GOING OUT OF STYLE?

But there are fears that traditional cha chaan teng are going out of style. While there is no specific data on

how many of these cafes are family-run or franchised, industry observers believe that the bigger players have begun to crowd out the smaller, family-run ones.

Mr Choi is one who believes the big boys “are definitely taking the market shares”.

At last count, Tsui Wah has 30 outlets across the city; Tai Hing has 57 in addition to its 11 outlets under a second brand, Men Wah Bing Teng; Hungghom Cafe has seven outlets; Kam Kee Cafe has 12; Capital Cafe has seven and Mr Choi’s Mon Kee Cafe now has five branches.

While the closure rates of traditional cha chaan teng are unavailable, F&B players say some older brands have been acquired, including Kam Kee Cafe, while others such as Mrs Tang Cafe were bought over soon after gaining popularity.

“Smaller operators without speciality will probably run out of business in the medium to long

UNDERONE ROOF

People don’t want to walk to a cha chaan teng; they’re too lazy. They want to go to a mall where they have access to everything.



MR SANDEEP HATHIRAMANI, who despite his Indian name, is born and bred in Hong Kong and runs a bar under Proof & Company. He frequents cha chaan teng on a weekly basis and loves the milk tea, french toast, fried rice and sweet and sour pork.

term,” Mr Choi said.

This, perhaps, explains why the likes of Lan Fong Yuen (famed for its milk tea), Australia Dairy Company (scrambled eggs) and Bing Kee (instant noodles and toasts) are still going strong.

Still, big chains offer seasonal menus, improved hygiene, a modern look and operate round the clock, making it tough for family-run outfits to keep up.

Mr Hathiramani estimated that the operating costs of a cha chaan teng could have easily gone up by 30 per cent in the past 20 years.

Food and beverage players attributed this to Hong Kong’s skyrocketing rents and additional merchant fees for processing credit card transactions, higher minimum wages, and greater difficulty in recruiting staff.

“Millennials don’t want these jobs any more. We want easier jobs with quicker gratification (rather) than long hours, serving the same dish every day,” said Mr Hathiramani.

KEEPING IT REAL

A key way for the smaller outfits to survive is to focus on food quality, fast service and authentic hospitality, said Mr Yeung. That way, the teahouse can rely on repeat customers in the neighbourhood.

More cha chaan teng with unique themes and menus with new twists have sprouted up, said Mr Chan, who added that the old way of doing things is no longer enough. The chef,

who owns a cha chaan teng in Sai Wan Ho and 11 outlets on the mainland, has turned to technology to be more efficient.

“We no longer hire chefs as the food is prepared in a central kitchen and sent out. We no longer use a cash register. Ordering of food, payment and replenishing stocks are done through smartphones via barcode scanning. This is the future and the benchmark,” he said.

It also eases the issue of labour crunch as his cha chaan teng here is helmed by only three employees.

“Operating cost is very low this way and the food is consistent,” he said.

Ultimately though, cha chaan teng need to woo the younger generation to keep the business afloat. So some share photos of celebrities who dine at the cafes, while others use social media to gain traction or win awards to help draw more of the younger customers, the F&B players said.

“The fear is that youth today don’t want to eat the same dish every day...Hence, big brands like Yum Cha or The Good Life Cafe are modernising,” said Mr Hathiramani.

“They use black sesame or squid ink; they make their food more beautiful (by) adding gold and beetroot; they try to attract the Instagram crowd to share it.”

Perhaps what also helps are the Hong Kong Tourism Board’s efforts to include cha chaan teng in its promotion of the city’s food culture.

Meanwhile, a new trend in the sector is expected to grow – cha chaan teng in shopping centres. And as older buildings are redeveloped, some F&B folks like Mr Yeung believe that more cha chaan teng will move into malls.

North Point, Tseung Kwan O and Olympic City are examples of places with malls that have the more premium cha chaan teng concept, said Mr Hathiramani.

“It’s a very cultural thing in Hong Kong to go to malls and spend the whole day there... They don’t go to mom-and-pop stores unless they’re in the neighbourhood,” he said. “So that’s the future, unfortunately. People don’t want to walk to a cha chaan teng; they’re too lazy. They want to go to a mall where they have access to everything.”

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S.E.A. View

Filipino resentment spills into the open in a soya splatter

President Duterte has embraced China with enthusiasm. But the uproar over a Chinese student's 'taho tantrum' reveals grievances over the unequal relationship.



Richard Javad Heydarian

For The Straits Times

MANILA • The image of gobs of creamy white soya pudding splattered on a blue police uniform has in recent days come to symbolise for many Filipinos all that is wrong in their country's relationship with China.

Deep-seated resentment spilled out in the open over the episode involving Zhang Jiale, a 23-year-old Chinese student, who hurled the dessert (a local delicacy called taho) at Filipino police officer William Cristobal, who tried to enforce the rule against taking drinks into the metro station.

In the Filipino imagination, the image of a haughty Chinese national disdainfully treating a Filipino law enforcer marked nothing less than utter national

humiliation. For many, it symbolised the asymmetry and increasingly subordinate nature of Manila's relations with Beijing. The rule of law, it would appear, does not apply to China or its nationals.

Despite President Rodrigo Duterte's best efforts to reorient his country's foreign policy, the ongoing Philippines-China rapprochement remains fragile. If anything, Mr Duterte's lavishly pro-Beijing rhetoric seems to have only reinforced simmering resentment among Filipinos.

From their perspective, Officer Cristobal had every right to stop Zhang from taking her cup of sweet tofu into the station. Following a bomb threat at Manila's MRT-3 system last month, the authorities introduced a "no liquids" policy. It did not help that in the video clip that went viral, Zhang came across as haughtily defiant, with hand on hip, as she glared across the turnstile at the officer with bean curd streaming down his shirt front and arm.

Politicians, mindful of upcoming mid-term elections in May, were quick to jump into the fray.

Vice-President Leni Robredo condemned the "taho incident", declaring "what happened is not just disrespect against our police

but also our country".

Crucially, even leading independent figures have chimed in. Senator Ping Lacson, a former police chief who has been broadly supportive of Mr Duterte's drug war, portrayed the incident as "a big insult to us (Filipinos)" and how it "highlights our pitiful condition" as a nation. "As Filipinos, we must be united. Even if our country is small, weak and poor, let us not allow them to treat us this way," he added.

Zhang has apologised for her "taho tantrum" following her arrest for assault, among other charges. But there is little sign that her expressions of regret will change attitudes about China among ordinary Filipinos.

To better understand the context, one should remember how popular opinion of policemen in the Philippines tends to be broadly negative. They are often seen as abusive, corrupt and self-indulgent. Their pivotal role in Mr Duterte's scorched-earth drug war has only reinforced public prejudice against the Philippine National Police (PNP). Their image has become so bad that the PNP authorities at one point threatened to sue a popular soap opera, Ang Probinsyano (The Provincial), for its portrayal of cops.

In a dramatic role reversal, however, policemen have now found themselves in the unusual role of victims and heroes. The dramatic outpouring of public sympathy for Officer Cristobal, who has quickly turned into a poster child for the PNP, only

underscores the depth of sentiments against China.

CHINA AND THE CHINESE, IN FILIPINO EYES

But what of sentiments towards people of Chinese descent?

Historically, the Chinese diaspora in the Philippines have enjoyed remarkable success, integrating seamlessly into the upper echelons of the local mestizo (mixed-blooded) elite.

Unlike in, say, neighbouring Indonesia and Malaysia, there have hardly been any major anti-Chinese pogroms for centuries.

This is remarkable in that although constituting barely 2 per cent of the population, the Chinese-Filipino minority controls close to 60 per cent of the country's wealth.

Many of the Philippines' richest and most powerful people are of partial or full Chinese descent.

They have, unlike many of their counterparts in South-east Asia, been openly proud of their Chinese ancestry. The Chinese mestizo Cojuangco dynasty alone has produced not only billionaires and celebrities but also two presidents, Mrs Corazon Aquino and her son, Mr Benigno Aquino.

But that is not to say there is no resentment over their wealth and power among the non-Chinese Filipino elite (some of partial Spanish descent) and the broader non-mestizo public.

Despite their diverse origins, people from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other parts of the world are often mistakenly seen as part of a monolithic group in popular Filipino imagination. For many Filipinos, they are all Chinese or, as the Spanish colonisers and their successors derogatively called them, *intsik*.

Meanwhile, Beijing continues to be seen by many Filipinos through the lens of the Cold War and earlier narratives of Spanish colonial masters, both of which portrayed mainland China as a menace.

Authoritative opinion surveys over three decades show China faring poorly among Filipinos. Its net trust rating was positive in only nine out of 47 occasions. Its current trust rating: minus 35.

China has consistently appeared at the far bottom of the list of the Philippines' preferred international partners, which tends to be dominated by the trio of the



In the video clip, Zhang Jiale (above) came across as haughtily defiant as she glared across the turnstile at Officer William Cristobal with bean curd streaming down his shirt front and arm. PHOTO: PAU MESIAS/FACEBOOK

United States, Japan and Australia.

Mr Duterte's efforts to reorient foreign policy towards China, not to mention his controversial quip about the Philippines becoming a "Chinese province", have only served to reinforce anti-China sentiments in the country.

WORRIES OVER CHINA TAKEOVERS AND ILLEGAL WORKERS

Over the past three months, even independent-leaning senators like Ms Grace Poe have led investigations into the influx of illegal Chinese workers into the country.

Last month, a senate labour committee chaired by Senator Joel Villanueva revealed that government officials do not even have accurate figures as to how many there were, including those who have taken on jobs that by law should be reserved for Filipinos. What further stoked outrage was the finding that as many as 119,000 Chinese nationals had skirted labour laws to work in the growing number of online casinos in major cities.

Separately, leading politicians have also opposed the entry of state-affiliated Chinese companies into strategic sectors, including the entry of China Telecom, as well as the prospective purchase of a major shipyard near the Subic naval base by Chinese companies. Officials

have expressed concern in view of China having seized reefs and shoals in the waters nearby that are claimed by Manila.

Similarly citing national security considerations, several senators, led by deputy senate president Ralph Recto, have blocked a US\$400 million (S\$544 million) deal between Philippine security agencies and a Chinese company for the installation of thousands of surveillance cameras across the country.

For China, Mr Duterte's election as president in 2016 heralded a "golden age" of diplomatic relations, as he set aside Manila's victory in the Hague tribunal ruling on China's expansive maritime claims in favour of closer ties and more Chinese investments.

But Mr Duterte's enthusiasm appears not to have filtered down. As the "taho tantrum" incident vividly demonstrates, to many Filipinos the ties with China are becoming too close for comfort, too overbearing for self-respect.

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Just as Ms Ocasio-Cortez is known by her initials – AOC – her Bill is already known by its shorthand, GND... The fact that a 29-year-old former bartender has gone from zero to the ubiquitous abbreviation of AOC in a few months tells us something about America's appetite for change.

New York Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, with US Democratic Senator Ed Markey beside her, delivering remarks on the "Green New Deal" resolution in Washington, DC, last week. The writer argues that Ms Ocasio-Cortez's resolution should be taken seriously as it has already been branded in the public's mind. PHOTO: AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE

America's unexpected socialist dawn

Democrats embrace radical policies to create rare ideological debate in US politics

Edward Luce

Anyone who thinks America's populist moment has passed should think again. President Donald Trump promised to make America great again.

Half of the Democratic party now vows to make their country socialist for the first time. Much that is solid is melting into air. A few years ago, most Democrats were scared to call

themselves liberal. Now they embrace socialism with abandon.

It may end in tears. A defeat to Mr Trump in 2020 would deliver an early grave to America's socialist dawn. Until then, however, US voters are catching a glimpse of something rare – a genuine ideological debate. It would be rash to predict the outcome.

The chief exhibit is Ms Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal.

By any measure, her Bill is preposterously extravagant. On one estimate, Ms Ocasio-Cortez's proposed new entitlements and public works would cost US\$6.6 trillion (S\$8.9 trillion) a year, which is two-thirds larger than America's US\$4 trillion federal budget.

Nothing like it has been seen. Moreover, Ms Ocasio-Cortez seems to have little idea how she would pay for it. Some say the Bill would be

self-funding because it would stimulate the economy. Others are punting on cost-free debt. According to modern monetary theory, governments can simply create new money without causing inflation.

Few Democrats are yet concerned with such details. Having watched Mr Trump take office with his brand of magical thinking, they are following suit. It would be tempting to write it off as a lengthy suicide note. But that would underestimate America's restlessness.

Almost every democratic presidential hopeful in the Senate – including Ms Kamala Harris, Mr Cory Booker, Ms Elizabeth Warren and Ms Kirsten Gillibrand – supports Ms Ocasio-Cortez's resolution.

LITMUS TEST

It has turned into a litmus test of a

candidate's credentials. There are three reasons to take it seriously. The first is that the Green New Deal is already branded in the public's mind. Just as Ms Ocasio-Cortez is known by her initials – AOC – her Bill is already known by its shorthand, GND. Few politicians, or Bills, make that distinction. Think of Mr John F. Kennedy (JFK) or Mr Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR). The fact that a 29-year-old former bartender has gone from zero to ubiquitous abbreviation in a few months tells us something about America's appetite for change. She is now the most influential figure in US politics after Mr Trump.

Second, Ms Ocasio-Cortez's resolution is a bold declaration of intent rather than a serious legislative proposal. Much as Mr Trump's supporters were said to have taken him seriously but not

literally, the same applies to the green deal.

Those doing the accounting may be missing the point. Its aim is to shake up the US debate. By that measure, it has already succeeded. The term "green" is no longer a lifestyle preference. It is a part of the economic calculus. Global warming and public investment are now linked in the popular mind.

Third, Americans seem to crave a choice. There was a time when US elections could be caricatured as Coca-Cola versus Pepsi – incrementalist Democrats versus free-market Republicans.

VODKA V SUPERGREEN JUICE

For the time being, such timidity is over. Mr Trump's example has bred imitation. The choice now looks more like vodka versus supergreen juice. When politics is framed this starkly, there are few places to hide.

Mr Trump sees green socialism as his chance of electoral salvation. Democrats want to take away your cars and your cows, he says. Moreover, they would force you to travel by train, which is the United

States equivalent of being sent to the gulags.

If his instinct is right, Ms Ocasio-Cortez could become Mr Trump's secret weapon. Forcing Democrats to vote on her Bill is an opportunity Republicans will not pass up.

A vote against it could damage a Democratic senator's prospects with the party's base. A vote in favour could make them unpopular to a general electorate.

History suggests Republicans have the tactical advantage. But what went before is not necessarily a useful guide. The past told us Mr Trump had little chance of taking his party's nomination. Experts made the error of taking him literally but not seriously.

Today, a majority of American millennials describe themselves as socialist. In practice, they are thinking of Scandinavia rather than Venezuela. Persuading them to turn out in higher numbers is the holy grail of Democratic politics. If Ms Ocasio-Cortez does that, she will have changed the climate of US politics. FINANCIAL TIMES



Students preparing for the arrival of Thai Princess Ubolratana Rajakanya on Thursday in Pichit Pittayakom school in Pichit Province. Thailand's Election Commission has dropped Princess Ubolratana from a list of nominees for prime minister for next month's election. ST PHOTO: TAN HUI YEE

TheViewFromAsia

The Princess and politics

Shock news of royal's entry into Thai politics dominated regional news but there were also other surprises from Kuala Lumpur and Seoul. Here are excerpts.

Meaning of being a royal

Tulsathit Taptim
The Nation, Thailand

Just a few days ago, opportunist parties in Thai politics had great options and were keeping them open. The strategy was to wait and see before opting to join the camp backing Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha or the opposition led by the Pheu Thai and Thai Raksa Chart parties.

All that changed in one dramatic day.

Thai Raksa Chart's move to nominate Princess Ubolratana Rajakanya as its candidate for prime minister was doomed by a royal command from the King.

At the same time, the tide also turned for medium-sized parties. In theory, they can still join the Pheu Thai-led alliance; in practice, they would have to be very bold to do so.

A princess spearheading a grassroots uprising is, after all, the stuff of fairy tales. In reality, and especially in the context of Thai politics, there is more to fear than ferocious dragons or giant catapults hurling fiery stones. And unlike bedtime stories, Thai politics spares no one.

Had she gone on to become prime minister, the romance would likely have evaporated quickly. Her special status may have become progressively glaring, particularly when placed next to that of the political fairy she represented.

In a fairy tale, a princess lost in the wilderness will eventually make a triumphant return. Those who harboured ill intentions against her will either be conquered or admit their mistake and re-pledge loyalty.

In Thai politics, Princess Ubolratana cannot expect anything of the sort.

Her nomination was always fraught with strategic risk. Even if she had been able to continue as a prime minister candidate, the original idea of having Pheu Thai sweep constituency elections and Thai Raksa Chart gather a sizeable number of "losing" votes, to claim House seats under the new proportional system, could have gone disastrously wrong.

Thanks to her widespread popularity, Thai Raksa Chart would have scored unwanted constituency victories at Pheu

Thai's expense. This would have upset a plan that required mathematical precision.

Apparently, Pheu Thai and Thai Raksa Chart do not have to worry about that now.

Fresh and urgent problems are presenting themselves. Some key figures have missed the electoral registration deadline. Pheu Thai, meanwhile, has fielded fewer than 250 constituency candidates, meaning much hope was being pinned on Thai Raksa Chart, whose future is now uncertain.

The target of 376 seats looked very possible a few days ago; it seems a tall order now.

More intriguing perhaps is how the alliance will explain its decision on the Princess to hardcore red shirts.

Though she relinquished her royal titles after marrying an American in 1972, Princess Ubolratana has always been accorded the respect and even reverence due to a princess by the Thai populace.

She has been well loved for her various charitable ventures, yet such status can be subjected to intense scrutiny by ideological members of the Pheu Thai alliance.

In a fairy tale, a wandering princess has no problem befriendling the villagers and other creatures of the forest. In the cut-throat world of Thai politics, blending in is a lot more difficult.

A fairy-tale princess can bridge inequality and divisiveness; in the real world, what should be bridged can be widened when issues are spun, distorted or misinterpreted.

In the real world, another Thai

Her nomination was always fraught with strategic risk. Even if she had been able to continue as a prime minister candidate, the original idea of having Pheu Thai sweep constituency elections and Thai Raksa Chart gather a sizeable number of "losing" votes, to claim House seats under the new proportional system, could have gone disastrously wrong.

princess often finds herself in the spotlight. Princess Ubolratana's younger sister, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, once wrote that when she was a child, she made toffee which tasted so good that compliments came pouring in left and right.

A caution against monetising it came from the Queen, however. "I sold my toffee to my mother's aides," Princess Sirindhorn wrote. "Everyone loved it, but mum warned that you couldn't just use your status to make people buy your stuff, unless it was meant for charity. Another thing was that it was an unfair investment, as all my ingredients were free – the sugar, milk and everything."

Maybe that is too trivial to be a bedtime story. But both princesses have told us the same, valuable thing: Their lives are never easy.

The stakes in fake degree scandal

Joceline Tan
The Star, Malaysia

The fake degree firestorm that is threatening to bring down the Deputy Foreign Minister could not have happened at a worse time for Bersatu.

Deputy Foreign Minister Marzuki Yahya's political career was on the rise, especially after he was appointed to the key post of secretary-general of Bersatu.

But the ground seems to be crumbling under his feet.

The Kedah-born Datuk Marzuki is fighting for his survival even as the cruel world of social media has pronounced him guilty and is demanding that he resigns from his Foreign Ministry job.

Nobody, including Mr Marzuki himself, had questioned post-May 9 media reports that he graduated from the prestigious Cambridge University. But when the scandal broke, Mr Marzuki clarified that it was Cambridge International University in the United States, which, to his further embarrassment, turned out to be a degree mill.

By then, the issue had acquired a life of its own.

The question on everyone's lips is whether Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad will take the necessary action to safeguard the image of his government and party.

As former Jelutong MP Jeff Ooi pointed out, the collateral damage to Bersatu is high. It is not only the party of the Prime Minister, Bersatu is supposed to be the backbone of Pakatan Harapan, and it aims to replace Umno as the party of choice for Malays.

And as some have pointed out, where is Malaysia going to put her face when Mr Marzuki comes face to

face with, for example, Singapore ministers, many of whom are genuine Oxbridge products.

The Marzuki scandal could not have happened at a worse time for Bersatu which is facing a pivotal by-election in Semenyih next month.

Park's political gambit

Kim Myong-sik
The Korea Herald, South Korea

For the first time in about two years, former President Park Geun-hye has taken a political gambit from inside a suburban Seoul prison.

Speaking through her lawyer, she assailed the top contender in the current leadership race at the Liberty Korea Party, her political home. Attorney Lee Young-ha picked at rather trivial matters in a TV interview last week to criticise Mr Hwang Kyo-ahn, prime minister under Park from 2016 to 2017, for failing to give the disgraced president humane treatment following her removal from office.

He said Mr Hwang "did not even know Park's prisoner ID number", and ignored her request for a table and a chair that she needed in her 6 sq m cell for her aching back.

Desperate to keep pro-Park members under his wing, Mr Hwang insisted he had done all he could to minimise Park's difficulties during the early 2017 turmoil.

We note with some surprise the confidence with which Park tested her influence on active members of the party, and we wonder what secret is there for the former president to try to deprive the apparent front runner of final victory in the party's chairmanship election, at the end of this month.

By proving her still substantial leverage over the main opposition party, does she want to invite the ruling force to consider a political solution of the current situation?

Talk of granting Park amnesty has increasingly been heard these days. And several thousand people again marched through Gwanghwamun last weekend demanding freedom for the former president.

Whoever considers giving her freedom in the near future may do so as a step for promoting national tolerance and harmony. For her part, Park should not help convince ruling party strategists that she will remain a symbol of conservative disunity.

• The View From Asia is a compilation of articles from The Straits Times' media partner Asia News Network, a grouping of 23 news organisations.

Building the 'infrastructure' of the mind

Mahfuz Anam

Just as we need the most modern infrastructure for a fast-growing economy, so too do we need a robust "infrastructure of the mind" to build an advanced knowledge-based society whose fundamental features are the ability to differ on the basis of knowledge and to think critically on the basis of reason.

Independent journalism becomes a part of this process by being the platform of that crucial public debate that can take place only where freedom of thought and expression is an inalienable right, not in theory, but in practice.

One of my lessons of 28 years of leading The Daily Star, the last 25 of it as its editor and publisher, is that as a polity we have not been able to properly understand the crucial importance of "freedom of thought and expression" and the consequent role and function of dissent in society, where journalism plays the role of a watchdog on a daily basis.

We have been stuck in the mindset that to criticise is to oppose, to disagree is to undermine, and to do both in public is to act as an enemy. Hence, as journalism's primary role is to present all sides to every story, especially the side that challenges or debunks the official version, we are often looked upon as the "enemy".

This outlook has created a wall of suspicion and antagonism between the independent media and the government.

This misunderstanding – some of it deliberate and unthinking and most of it knee-jerk – has unfortunately resulted in a dysfunctional relationship between the government and the independent press.

This in turn has resulted in the adoption of several laws in the recent past aimed at harnessing the press and preventing it from playing exactly the role that it was meant for. This, in my view, is suicidal. In reality, a harnessed media inevitably results in a diminished democracy.

On the occasion of the 28th anniversary of The Daily Star, I could not have a greater wish than to plead for the restoration of that space that permits journalism to flourish in all its aspects and not just be cheerleaders.

This I do so in full awareness that what Bangladesh needs today is a robust media that can publish and broadcast all sides of a story without the constant fear of falling on the wrong side of unjust "laws".

As Bangladesh moves ahead and the world looks upon us with incredulity and as we move up the ladder of development, we need to build not only the roads and bridges on the land, but also the "infrastructure of the mind".

The most critical ingredient of developing the mind is the capacity for critical thinking, whose soul is "questioning".

Only by asking the critical questions can we get the most urgently needed answers.

While philosophers, scientists, social reformers raised questions that changed our civilisations, independent journalism raises questions that bring to light the everyday plights and distortions that help the judiciary to dispense justice, Parliament to make appropriate laws and the government to ensure good governance.

As The Daily Star embarks on its journey into the future we face some daunting and some very exciting challenges.

The daunting ones concern the future of print media and the exciting ones are in the realm of the digital.

The global trend has been the decline of the circulation of newspapers.

With the spread of the Internet, more and more readers and viewers are receiving their news online. However, the good news is that contrary to global trends, print media in South Asia has not only held steady, as in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, but has also seen a rise in Indian newspaper circulation.

Just as "Digital Bangladesh" is an emerging reality, so is the coming of the digital media, and we in The Daily Star are taking the necessary steps so that we can serve our readers better and in multi-platforms – print, online, multimedia and mobile.

However the realities of the future change, one thing will remain constant: Print media, in all its multi-platform versions, will only survive if we have readership. Thus serving our readers better will be, as it has been, the main focus of The Daily Star. This we re-pledge, while profusely thanking our readers for patronising us for nearly three decades.

• The writer is the editor and publisher of The Daily Star, Bangladesh. The paper is a member of the Asia News Network, an alliance of 23 news media titles.

As Bangladesh moves ahead and the world looks upon us with incredulity and as we move up the ladder of development, we need to build not only the roads and bridges on the land, but also the "infrastructure of the mind". The most critical ingredient of developing the mind is the capacity for critical thinking, whose soul is "questioning". Only by asking the critical questions can we get the most urgently needed answers.

BIG PICTURE

WEATHER

Thundery showers in the afternoon.
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PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/MATT CURNOCK

Great Barrier Reef in troubled waters

Polluted flood waters from the coast of Queensland state in Australia are encroaching on the outer reaches of the Great Barrier Reef, sparking a fresh threat to the beleaguered natural wonder.

Scientists are surveying the marine fallout from the recent floods, which sent muddy waters fanning out from swollen rivers, reported ABC News.

Images of the sediment approaching the reef – such as this image which was taken around Cape Cleveland, off Townsville, a coastal city in north-eastern Queensland –

have been shared around the world. Researchers say the flood waters, which likely contain nitrogen and pesticide chemicals, could potentially kill seagrass and coral that are already stressed by an unprecedented run of recent mass bleaching events.

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Mr. Ng Chee Meng
Minister, Prime Minister's Office
Adviser to Pasir Ris – Punggol GROs
Member of Parliament for Pasir Ris – Punggol GRC



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Move to help caregivers join workforce

Tripartite effort to study ways to boost eldercare community services to help middle-aged women get jobs

Jev Akshay Jeevan

The labour movement will look at ways to increase the employment rates of middle-aged women, many of whom indicated in a survey last year that they do not look for work because of caregiving duties.

MORE FLEXIBILITY

I am not promoting a switch from full-time to part-time work for the sake of it. I am promoting it so that those who have no work can at least work part time.



NTUC DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL HENG CHEE HOW

In order to do that, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) said it will consider the types of eldercare services in the community that need to be provided and how they can be funded.

It said a reform of employment models to include flexible work options is also critical.

“There must be enough quality yet affordable eldercare services in the community for caregivers to entrust their family care recipients to, so that they would not need to quit their work entirely in the first instance, or are able to take on part-time work if they cannot take on full-time jobs,” NTUC said in a statement yesterday.

The labour movement said it will collaborate with the Singapore National Employers Federation and the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) to study, recommend and subsequently implement ways to get more middle-aged women to join the workforce.

“It is crucial for all Singaporeans, including caregivers, to have the chance and choice to earn a steady



NTUC deputy secretary-general Heng Chee How with Ms Koh Leh Choo, who is now a part-time homecare nurse with NTUC Health. Ms Koh had to resign from her full-time job to care for her father in 2017. ST PHOTO: JEV AKSHAY JEEVAN

source of income to meet current expenses and more importantly, to strengthen their retirement adequacy,” NTUC said.

A 2018 MOM survey showed there were 168,300 unemployed female residents aged 40 to 59 who

were not in the 2.3 million-strong labour force. Of these unemployed women, one in five indicated that they did not seek employment because they had to care for family members, other than children.

The announcement of the tripartite effort follows Wednesday’s Par-

liament debate in which MPs called for caregivers to be given more support.

Among other things, they had proposed greater financial assistance in the form of grants, as well as more flexible work arrangements.

NTUC deputy secretary-general Heng Chee How said the mindset of employers must also be changed to increase their willingness to hire part-time employees and workers with flexible schedules.

But he said that “unions can only do so much” because jobs and how jobs are structured are determined by employers.

Besides changing mindsets, the labour movement believes strengthening know-how and devising the right incentives are important.

“I am not promoting a switch from full-time to part-time work for the sake of it. I am promoting it so that those who have no work can at least work part time,” said Mr Heng.

Caregiver Koh Leh Choo, 61, was employed as a full-time nurse until February 2017, but she was forced to resign to look after her father, who is now 87 years old.

“I can’t work full time as my father needs to frequently visit the hospital. I want to be there for him,” she said.

After more than a year without work, Ms Koh said, she struggled to keep up with expenses.

She also found it difficult to find another job as many employers were not keen to hire part-time employees, and because of her age.

About three months ago, she secured a job with NTUC Health as a part-time homecare nurse.

“I feel more at peace and I’m comforted that I have a steady income while at the same time, I’m able to care for my father,” Ms Koh said.

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A glimpse of unique travel experiences in America



Mr Richard Launder, president and chief executive of tour operator Destination America, speaking yesterday at the Central Public Library during the askST@NLB session conducted by ST travel writer Lee Siew Hua.
ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO

askST@NLB speaker tells of the myriad options the country has to offer

Vanessa Liu

Imagine visiting the city of Louisville in Kentucky in the US, the birthplace of Muhammad Ali, meeting his brother and hearing what it was like to grow up with the boxing legend.

That might seem like a stretch, but it is the kind of unique travel experience that Mr Richard Launder, president and chief executive of tour operator Destination America, wants to bring customers.

The guest speaker at askST@NLB last night, Mr Launder is also the director of The Travel Corporation USA – the parent company of Destination America, which specialises in custom group and incentive travel.

The talk at the Central Public Library in Victoria Street, attended by 150 readers, was conducted by The Straits Times travel writer Lee Siew Hua.

It gave the audience a peek at the myriad options both North and South America have to offer.

Questions posed by Ms Lee to Mr Launder in their friendly back-and-forth that lasted 1½ hours included whether the United States was safe for travellers, and what a good destination might be for first-time visitors.

As an introduction, Mr Launder quizzed the audience on various places he had photographed in national parks across the US – demonstrating the diversity of landscapes present in the more than 50 parks.

He also talked about up-and-coming travel destinations, such as the Pacific Northwest and Nashville, a city in the state of Tennessee, which he said has much to offer in terms of music for fans of country, blues and jazz.

Mr Launder also named Colombia as a “world-class destination” for travellers interested in exploring South America.

He cited an increasing number of solo travellers “over the next 10, 15, 20 years” as something to look out for. He noted that his company intends to expand the number of departures exclusive to “solo travellers who might want the company of others who are in similar circumstances as themselves”.

Video producer Matt Lim, 49, said he liked how Mr Launder talked about New York City as an example of how cities reinvent themselves. “I’ve not thought of going back to New York after I visited it 10 years ago because I thought I had seen it all. But after he mentioned places like the High Line and the Oculus, I feel like (going back again),” he said.

The askST@NLB series is a monthly collaboration between the National Library Board and ST in which ST journalists helm discussions on topics.

The next session will be led by sports journalist Rohit Brijnath and medal-winning shooter Jasmine Ser on March 7. Readers can register at str.sg/askRohit1

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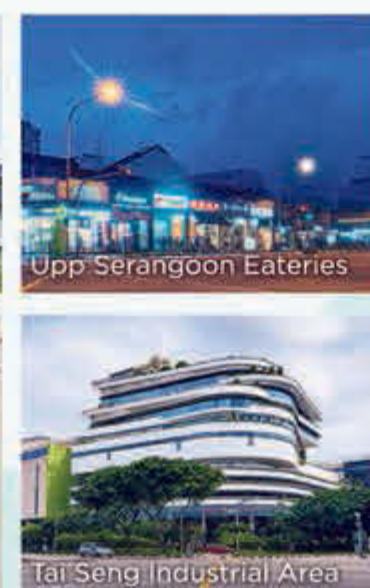


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Performers presenting Chingay's finale, Voyage of Dreams – from Singapore to Singaporean, which features a float decorated with DNA structures to symbolise the unique Singapore DNA. ST PHOTOS: KELVIN CHNG

Chingay 2019

DOUBLE DELIGHT

Annual parade, part of Chinese New Year festivities, coincides with the Singapore Bicentennial

A 270m painting to commemorate the Singapore Bicentennial was one of the highlights of last night's Chingay parade.

The annual parade held at the F1 Pit Building, part of Chinese New Year festivities, coincides with the bicentennial, which commemorates the 200th anniversary of Sir Stamford Raffles' arrival here in 1819.

It featured about 6,500 performers from more than 50 local and foreign parade contingents. There were acrobatic stilt walkers, and freestyle lions on high poles.

The 10 foreign contingents that took part included those from South Korea, which had 130 performers from the Buan Art Force Dance Company and the Korean Taekwondo Martial Art Academy.

The other groups hailed from countries such as Cambodia, China, Indonesia and Japan.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Mrs Lee were the guests of honour at the parade.

The finale, Voyage of Dreams – from Singapore to Singaporean, included an aerial performance from a double-helix structure representing the Singaporean DNA.

The parade will also take place tonight.

6,500

Number of performers in the Chingay parade.



Left: A member of the North West Community Development Council Dance-Fit Club performing during the parade.

Below left: Singapore Soka Association members presenting the 270m-long painting to commemorate the Singapore Bicentennial. The painting was one of the parade's highlights.

Below right: "Racers" zip down the parade route in 30 go-karts, in an act called "Feel the rush".



Right: A member of the audience interacting with a "giraffe" on the move. The act was presented by martial arts academy Martial House.

Far right: Cambodian performers showcasing their classical and contemporary dance moves.



Ex-forklift operator jailed for corruption

Truck drivers had to give him bribes to jump queue when collecting or returning containers

Shaffiq Alkhatib

A forklift operator accepted bribes from truck drivers so that they could jump the queue when collecting or returning containers, and he received more than \$10,000 from them over nearly five years.

Chinese national Zhao Yucun, 43, whose work permit has since been cancelled, was jailed for four months yesterday after he pleaded guilty to a corruption charge.

He was also ordered to pay a penalty of \$10,863 and will have to spend an additional two weeks behind bars if he is unable to pay the amount.

Zhao, who worked for Cogent Container Depot which provides container storage services, was the second forklift operator from the firm to be dealt with in court this year for taking bribes.

Another Chinese national, Chen Ziliang, 47, was jailed for two months and ordered to pay a penalty of \$4,870.50 on Jan 10 after admitting to a similar offence. Chen had collected nearly \$5,000 from the truck drivers.

Yesterday, the court heard that those who did not bribe Zhao had to endure a longer waiting time.

He committed his offences between Sept 2, 2013 and March 12 last year, collecting up to \$10 in bribes daily.

As a forklift operator, he received a monthly salary of \$1,430 and worked six days a week from Monday to Saturday.

He was first deployed at Cogent's container yard in Jalan Terusan,

near Jurong Port Road, from September 2013 to November 2017. After that, he worked at the firm's other container yard in Buroh Crescent near Pioneer Road.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Ang Siok Chen said forklift operators are not allowed to receive monies from truck drivers when carrying out their duties.

However, Zhao collected money from them despite knowing that he was not allowed to do so.

DPP Ang added: "The truck drivers would place coins at the mud-guard of the forklift that the accused was operating. Then, he would collect these coins during his break and keep them in his pocket."

"Truck drivers who gave monies to the accused would be allowed to jump the queue for the collection or return of containers, whereas those who did not would have to wait longer as the accused would delay



Zhao Yucun, who got over \$10,000 in bribes, was jailed for four months and ordered to pay a penalty of \$10,863.

their collection or return of containers."

On Oct 20, 2017, a truck driver complained to Chen about the long waiting time to get served. Chen replied that the norm was to give him \$1 or risk having to wait longer in the queue.

Court documents did not state if the driver alerted the authorities but the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau conducted a raid at the yard on March 12 last year.

Officers then apprehended Zhao and Chen.

Offenders convicted of corruption can be jailed for up to five years and fined up to \$100,000.

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Neo Kian Siong is expected to be sentenced on April 17. He is out on bail of \$50,000.

Ex-exec admits taking over \$740k in bribes

A former Keppel Shipyard senior procurement officer has admitted to taking more than \$740,000 in bribes from 2007 to 2014, a district court heard yesterday.

Neo Kian Siong admitted that while at the firm, he had obtained the bribes from some of its suppliers after revealing to them the prices quoted by their competitors.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Eugene Sng said: "These suppliers would generally call him just before the deadline to submit quotes for a given order, at which point the accused would inform them of the lowest existing quote. This allowed them to submit a quote that was slightly lower and thereby obtain orders from Keppel Shipyard. The accused was not authorised to give such information to the suppliers."

Neo, 63, pleaded guilty yesterday to 26 corruption charges and 28 counts of dealing with the benefits of his ill-gotten gains.

DPP Sng said Neo started working for Keppel Shipyard in 1981 as a clerical assistant and became a senior procurement officer in 2014. He was tasked with procuring supplies such as steel structures and pipes. He handled about 8,000 purchase orders in 2014.

According to court documents, Neo received bribes from eight people: Mr Ong Chim Sum, founding director of Kim Seng Huat; his son, Mr Andy Ong Tong Yang; Mr Tony Ong Swee Tek, founder of First Hydraulic and Industries; Ms Juliana Lee May Ling, founder of Athical Engineering; Mr Sean Tee Boon Seng, then external sales engineer with Prochem Pipeline Products Singapore; Mr Nik Chew Kin Peng, then a director at Special Steel and Alloy; Mr Ivan Chui Kum Hoong from U-Metal; and Mr Martin Kuah Wee Peng, who told Neo in 2009 he would be taking over Wei Tat Marine Hardware from his father. These eight have not been taken to court.

Neo is out on bail of \$50,000 and is expected to be sentenced on April 17.

Shaffiq Alkhatib



A suspected abuser of new psychoactive substances (NPS) being questioned by CNB plainclothes officers during an operation on Tuesday near Lavender Road. The suspect was found with tobacco believed to be laced with NPS when his belongings were searched.
ST PHOTOS: ZAIHAN MOHAMED YUSOF

Rare glimpse into CNB blitz on new psychoactive substances

The Straits Times sees how ‘A’ division CNB officers conduct ops against drug suspects

Zaihan Mohamed Yusof

The bald man sat at the coffee shop enjoying a drink. He was joined at the table by a few others who were believed to have received small packets from the man.

The exchange at the busy coffee shop would have gone unnoticed. But, unknown to the group, they were being observed by plainclothes officers from the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB), sitting a few tables away.

The activity at the coffee shop in Kallang on Tuesday afternoon was relayed to a larger team back at CNB headquarters in New Bridge Road.

That day, The Straits Times was given a rare glimpse into how “A” division CNB officers conduct operations against suspected dealers and abusers of new psychoactive substances (NPS).

In a four-day, islandwide operation which ended yesterday morning, CNB arrested 92 suspected drug offenders and seized various drugs including 116g of NPS, 111g of cannabis and 296 Ecstasy tablets.

At the operation briefing attended by ST, a detailed map and photographs of the target location were displayed.

About a dozen or so officers – both men and women – were reminded of their individual roles and the obstacles they might face.

NPS, which mimic the effects of harder drugs like cannabis and cocaine, are often mistaken as harmless or legal highs.

But they can be addictive and

deadly, as NPS have “unknown, dangerous toxicology effects”, CNB said on its website.

Known by their street names such as Mushroom, Kronic or Spice, these synthetic drugs come in tablet form or tobacco infused with chemicals.

ST followed one surveillance team which kept a two-hour watch from around 3pm on Tuesday from a nearby Housing Board block.

The other CNB officers blended in well despite sitting in the same coffee shop as the suspects.

When the man and three other suspects left the coffee shop, it was time to spring the ambush.

With the area surrounded, the suspects were confronted under a nearby shelter.

They were too deep in conversation to notice the approaching officers. The man and three other suspects were questioned and searched thoroughly, including the bicycles they rode.

All of them were handcuffed. The officers soon found tobacco wrapped in small packets of paper. The contents were seized to be analysed.

Later at night, another operation near Lavender Road resulted in the arrest of two men who were found with tobacco suspected to be laced with NPS.

In 2016, CNB figures showed 1,769 tablets and 87.17g of NPS were seized. The following year, 642 tablets and about 3.5kg of NPS were confiscated.

NPS were implicated in 74 deaths in Scotland in 2015. A total of 42 deaths from Latvia, Denmark, Fin-



Two suspects being handcuffed after they were searched by plainclothes CNB officers, who found tobacco wrapped in paper in their possession. The officers believed the tobacco had been laced with NPS or new psychoactive substances.

Crackdown on synthetic drugs



<http://str.sg/cnbraid>

land and Sweden in 2016 were associated with NPS use, a 2017 study by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction showed.

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in the United States, one commonly abused NPS is 3,4-methylenedioxypyrovalerone, which affects the brain in a way similar to cocaine but is at least 10 times more potent.

ONDCP also reported that poison control centres in the US received more than 8,000 telephone calls in 2015 relating to NPS abuse.

Under Singapore’s laws, a person found guilty of consuming NPS can be jailed for a maximum of 10 years or fined \$20,000, or both.

Anybody who is guilty of trafficking or manufacturing NPS can be jailed for a minimum of five years with five strokes of the cane.

zaihan@sph.com.sg

4-day op nets \$19k of drugs, 92 suspects

The authorities have arrested 92 suspected drug offenders and seized various drugs, including cannabis and heroin, in an island-wide operation.

The drugs are estimated to have a total street value of about \$19,000.

In a statement yesterday, the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) said 116g of new psychoactive substances, 111g of cannabis, 58g of “Ice”, 54g of ketamine, 9g of heroin, 296 Ecstasy tablets and 12 Erimin-5 tablets were seized in the four-day operation that started on Monday morning.

Erimin-5 and Ice are street names for Nimetazepam, a hypnotic drug, and methamphetamine, respectively.

Areas covered in the island-wide operation included Buangkok, Choa Chu Kang, Geylang, Jurong, Marsiling, Pasir Ris, Toa Payoh, Woodlands and Yishun.

In one of the cases, CNB officers raided a unit in a private apartment building near River Valley Close on Monday morning.

A 39-year-old Singaporean man suspected of drug trafficking was arrested and 10g of Ice, 24g of ketamine, 91g of cannabis, 10 Erimin-5 tablets and 42 Ecstasy tablets were recovered from the unit.

More than \$7,000 in cash, some foreign currencies as well as various drug paraphernalia and a digital weighing scale were also seized.

CNB officers also recovered one Erimin-5 tablet and a variety of unknown tablets from the taxi driven by the 39-year-old suspect.

In a separate case, two suspected drug abusers aged 18 and 28, both Singaporean men, were arrested by CNB officers at a unit near Marsiling Lane on Monday.

A small amount of Ice was recovered from the 28-year-old’s bedroom, where his seven-year-old son was sleeping.

Preliminary investigations found that both suspects have been abusing drugs in the unit, CNB said.

In yet another case, CNB officers arrested two suspected drug abusers, a 36-year-old man and a 29-year-old woman, both Singaporean, at a unit near Buangkok Crescent on Tuesday.

Various drug-taking equipment and 114 unknown tablets were seized from the unit.

Two children, a five-year-old boy and a nine-year-old girl, were present during the arrest, said CNB.

Preliminary investigations found that the female suspect had abused methamphetamine on Monday despite being eight months pregnant.

The children are under the care of suitable family members, CNB said, adding that they are working closely with the Ministry of Social and Family Development to oversee their welfare and ensure that they continue to receive the necessary support.

CNB is investigating the drug activities of all the arrested suspects.

Choo Yun Ting

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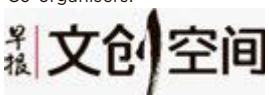
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Zaobao digital special on inequality wins award

Joy Pang

A team from Lianhe Zaobao sought to tackle the subject of inequality through the personal stories of Singaporeans from different backgrounds coping with poverty.

They interviewed 35 households in Ang Mo Kio, Kallang, Redhill, Toa Payoh and Yishun, and pieced together a widely shared and discussed visual interactive feature that looked at how these families coped with their anxieties.

They also put together a graphic, illustrated in muted colours, that featured two boys from different socio-economic backgrounds talking, and transitioned into a close look at the stories of various families.

Yesterday, the efforts of the seven-member team were recognised when The Inequality Sketch won the Best Digital Feature in Singapore Press Holdings’ Chinese Media Group (CMG) annual awards.

“The challenge lay in how to present inequality from a different perspective,” said Ms Ng Wai Mun, one of two writers on the team. Other members included writer Wong Siew Fong and illustrator Loo Fang Kai.

The awards were presented at the group’s annual Chinese New Year get-together, where CMG head Lee Huay Leng congratulated her colleagues for their display of dedication and unity.

“However, we must not rest on the laurels of past achievements,” she added, using the story of the Three Little Pigs to stress the importance of staying adaptable.

A total of 15 awards were handed out yesterday.

Winning Best Video was The Story of a Bowl of Shark’s Fin Soup, the brainchild of Ms Lee Lay Ming and her colleagues at CMG Digital.

The 20-minute documentary took a total of six months to complete, and saw Ms Lee travelling to Spain and Taiwan to explore the complex issue of shark’s fin consumption in a compelling way.

“I remember the process being quite painful,” said Ms Lee, adding they asked themselves: “How do we make it interesting and relevant for viewers?”



The Singapore Press Holdings’ Chinese Media Group annual awards, 15 in total, were presented yesterday to celebrate the group’s journalistic achievements of the past year. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

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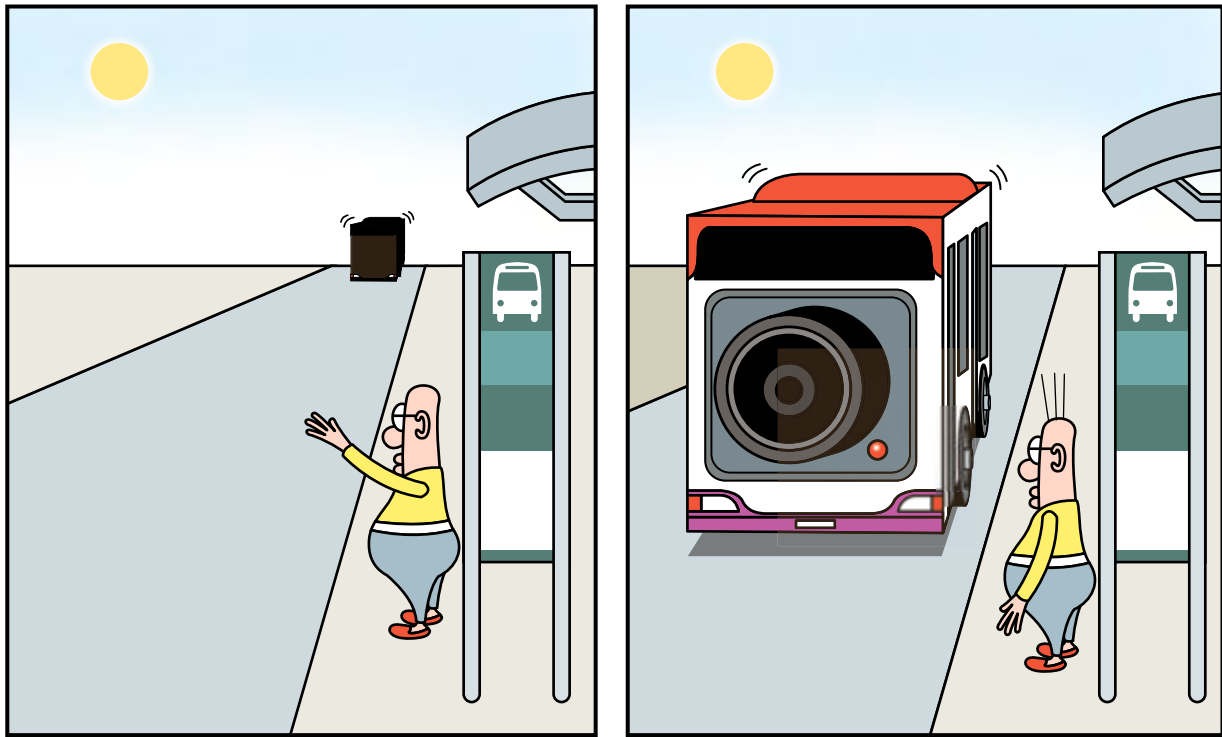
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FORUM

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Use mileage to decide on car inspection

The recent discussion in the Forum pages regarding the compulsory three-yearly vehicle inspection was interesting and it concerns most car owners (Check for 3-year-old cars a waste of money, Jan 30; Inspection of 3-year-old cars ensures safety, Feb 12).

I have a friend whose car is about 2½ years old but which has clocked mileage of over 130,000km.

I know of car owners who do not hit that kind of mileage even when they are scrapping their cars at the

10th year of their lives.

With private hire cars increasing in popularity, I believe there will be more and more of these high-mileage cars on the roads.

It is logical to assume that higher usage will lead to higher wear and tear – it is the reason car dealers require us to service our vehicles every 10,000km or after not more than six months.

It makes more sense for the Land Transport Authority (LTA) to use this mileage-based approach,

coupled with a time-based one for our compulsory inspections. The reminders can be sent through e-mail or text messaging.

Another suggestion for LTA to consider is to incorporate car inspection with car servicing. LTA could specify the items that are to be checked by the service centre.

LTA could then do a random audit from time to time for compliance and take action if necessary.

Sim Lim Onn

SMEs should switch to Fast e-payments

The recent spate of cases of small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) employees defrauding their employers have invariably involved the use of company cheque books in the custody of rogue employees. SMEs can reduce the risk of such fraud by switching from cheque to Fast and Secure Transfer (Fast) payments.

Employees now responsible for cheque preparation can be given “preparer” role and their employers, who now sign the cheques, can be the “approver” in a Fast payment.

All potential risks associated with cheque payments, such as the use of erasable ink or forged signatures, will be eliminated.

And as electronic approvals can be executed from anywhere in the

world, employers will no longer need to pre-sign blank cheques when they travel, thus eliminating another major source of such fraud cases.

The banking system will be better off too, as it is much cheaper to process Fast payments than cheques.

Speaking to fellow SME owners, I have gathered that one reason for not adopting Fast is that every transaction is chargeable, while the first 30 cheque payments in a month is free.

In the light of the advantages of Fast, banks should treat these on an equal footing as cheque payments by giving each client a free allowance of 30 free Fast payments a month.

Cheng Shoong Tat

Move away from illness-based approach for healthcare

The rising cost of healthcare in Singapore has been well documented.

Annual healthcare spending has been increasing every year since 2010, with a projected cost of \$13 billion next year. While there are many reasons contributing to this, the long-term upward trend of healthcare costs is worrying.

Currently, high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and obesity are prevalent in as much as one-third of the population.

Additionally, it is predicted that there will be a significant increase in the number of diabetes, heart attack and stroke cases by 2030.

These chronic issues are preventable though.

As costs to treat these issues continue to rise, the Health Promotion Board needs to reconceptualise healthcare from an illness-based approach to one of optimising health needs.

Such an emphasis offers significant benefits, such as improvement of overall health and prevention of health issues, and will also reduce costs.

This requires little investment in technology, medication, special training or innovative facilities.

Promoting the benefits of living a healthy life will also reduce the projected increase of chronic diseases that are preventable.

Alan Cromlish

FORUM ONLINE

1. LETTERS OF THE WEEK: Go online to see this week's top three picks.

2. HO LAY PING (MS): Pitfalls of decriminalising attempted suicide



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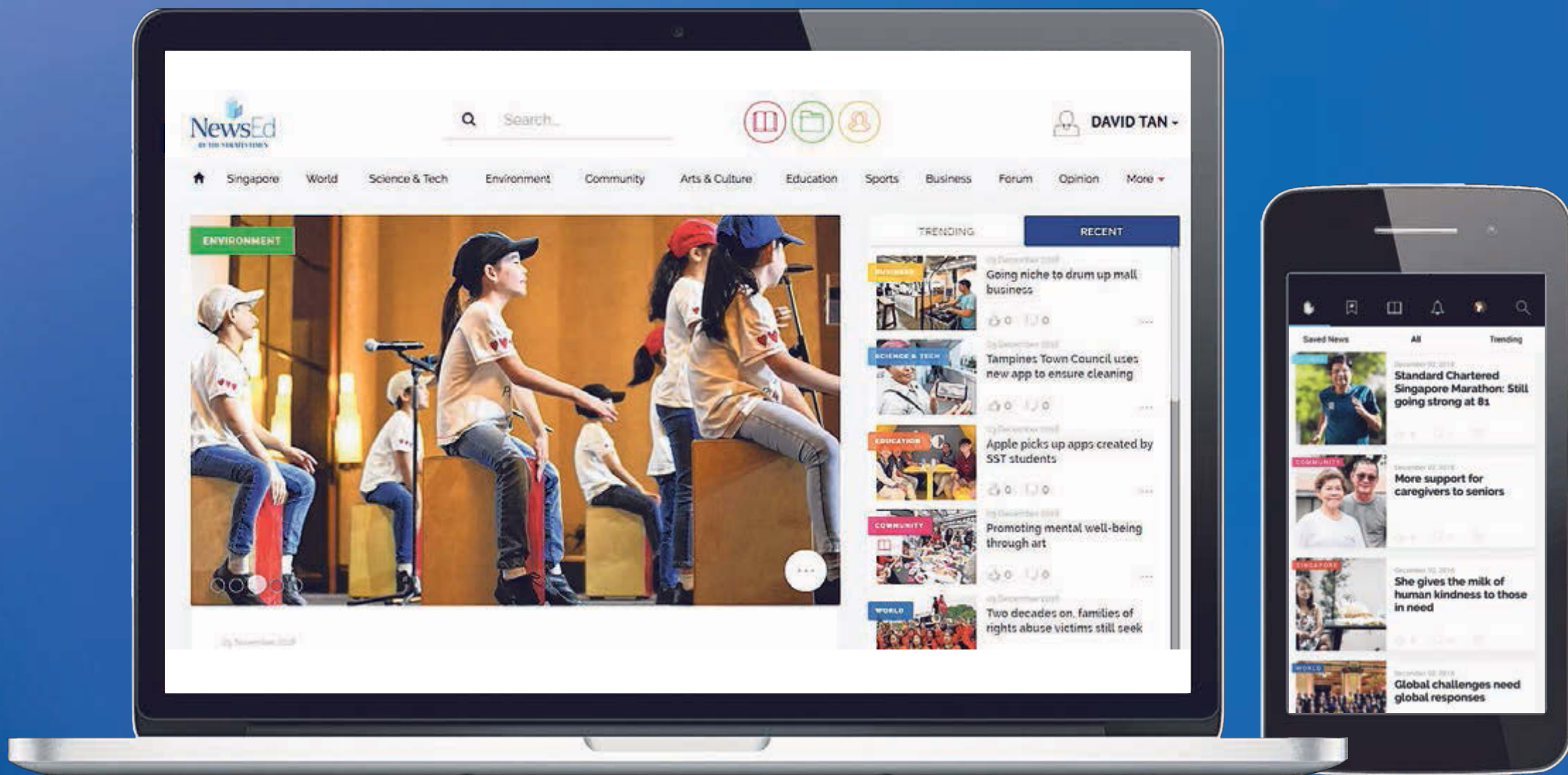
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Pitfalls of decriminalising attempted suicide

As someone who overcame suicide and is now a passionate advocate for the sanctity of life, I am sad to see suicide being decriminalised in our nation (Do more to help those at risk of suicide, Feb 13).

Suicide is truly a multifaceted and complex issue, and the law should not be excluded from having a deterrent effect on people who see death as the only option in their difficult circumstances.

I gave up the idea of further suicide attempts after police officers gently reminded me that attempting suicide was an offence.

There was no need for the authorities to restrain or prosecute me, for I was cooperative and clearly in distress.

In recent years, I managed to persuade a young foreigner from killing herself just by informing her the offensive nature of suicide in our nation.

Human life is sacred and should not be violated, not even by ourselves.

As someone who once suffered greatly from depression, I found that self-destruction was a way of exerting the last control over my messy life.

My mental illness was a deviant state that nearly robbed me of the abundant life that I am leading now.

However, the strong negative social stigma associated with mental illness and suicide compelled me to seek out alternatives other than death.

The decriminalisation of suicide perpetuates the erroneous message of “my body, my choice”.

When it is no longer mandatory to report a suicide attempt, people will stop reporting it as it is not a crime.

Ho Lay Ping (Ms)

Our founding fathers showed us that if leaders take things for granted, they will be dealt with. This is even so years after an incident has long been forgotten.

The action taken against employees who were negligent in the SingHealth data breach incident may have demonstrated only part of the accountability and how the Government has not gone soft.

The Committee of Inquiry’s public report of the cyber attack pointed out some disconcerting facts which illustrated lackadaisical behaviour and a cavalier attitude towards ground-level employees in SingHealth.

I wonder if action should be taken against those in leadership positions, even after they have left an organisation.

Tan Kar Quan

Full accountability means action against leaders too

It is heartening to hear from Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat that the Government has not gone soft when it comes to accountability of leaders who were found to have neglected their fiduciary duties (Singapore Govt has not gone slack, Feb 9).

It is just as important that accountability does not morph into a blaming exercise when lapses occur.

Govt introduced Net Investment Returns in 2009

We thank Associate Professor Tan Khue Giap and Mr Tan Yan Yi for their views (Why a forward looking budget is needed, Feb 15).

Budget 2019 is indeed part of the Government’s long-term strategic plan for Singapore’s future. The Minister for Finance will deliver the Budget Statement on Monday.

The authors referenced the role of Net Investment Income in Singapore’s fiscal system.

The Government introduced the Net Investment Returns (NIR) framework in Financial Year (FY) 2009.

Under the NIR framework, the Government is allowed to spend up to 50 per cent of the expected long-term real rate of returns on its relevant assets.

Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC and the Monetary Authority of Singapore were first included in this framework from FY2009, followed by Temasek from FY2016.

Lim Yui Chien
Director (Corporate Communications)
Ministry of Finance

Time to admit, fix mistake and move on

I cannot help but disagree with Communications and Information Minister S. Iswaran’s comment that the public sector is subject to the same, if not higher, rigorous standards of data governance as the private sector.

Banks and insurance companies, for example, have strict policies and measures in place to prevent staff from downloading customers’ data. Storage devices are tightly controlled and only company-issued devices can be used.

System checks are in place to detect and flag any breaches. Anyone caught breaching it is subject to severe penalties.

I can accept that no matter how secure a system may be, it could still be subject to hacking and data breaches, and any organisation could still fall victim, regardless of how robust the system is.

However, the recent breach and data leak in the Ministry of Health appear to be the result of negligence.

How can the standards of data governance be robust when employees are able to download patients’ data without any form of control?

A mistake has been made. It is time to admit it, fix it and move on.

Patrick Tan Siong Kuan

Offering support to HIV patients will reduce leak’s impact

I agree with senior health correspondent Salma Khalik (People hold power to fight stigma, show compassion, Feb 13).

While some people felt that the Ministry of Health (MOH) should have informed the public earlier about the HIV data leak, I support MOH’s decision not to do so, especially as the ministry had assessed the threat to be contained.

There is still a lot of prejudice against people with HIV. Imagine the mental stress on them if MOH had released the news.

There are already rumours of HIV-infected people wanting to commit suicide. I believe this was MOH’s primary concern when it first knew of the breach too.

The only way to stop Mikhay Farrera Brochez from threatening to release the information is if Singaporeans are supportive of HIV-infected people and do not discriminate against them.

We should not be blaming MOH when this is the act of two selfish individuals.

Pang Shi Jie

OnFacebook

A writer says that the success of our education system should also be measured by how well it serves those who don’t attend private classes.

The education system has to be judged based on how much it helps those who do not attend outside classes.

But then, something has to give. Literacy and numeracy don’t come from teaching “creatively”. It is the result of sheer hard work, memorisation, and yes, drilling.

Jackson Lee

The true measure of success of education is how successful students are when then grow up in terms of personal, familial, community, career.

Abraham Jacob

This is Singapore. Results mean everything. Efficiency, proficiency, effectiveness are all that matter. Morals, ethics, kindness and experience take a

very far back seat.

Eu Jin Kang

Should property type be used as a yardstick for rebates and handouts?

Property type should not be used. It doesn’t mean that people who live in five-room flats earn more. These owners could have bought bigger units years ago but were retrenched and are struggling to make ends meet.

Lai Yin Lee

Rebates and handouts should be based on income tax returns per household as this reflects their eligibility to get help. If rebates are based on property tax then property type is proper.

Harry Chia

There is no doubt most people living in private property are better off than most people living in HDB flats.

The system is to help the poor. Any distribution scheme based on HDB room-type makes such distribution easier to manage and fair for most poor families.

Jack Tong

Anyone who has a private property or car should be automatically disqualified.

As Df

Should inward-facing cameras be allowed in private-hire vehicles?

If buses can have them, why not the other forms of transportation?

Decry Hardiyanto Bin Zaidi

Please allow it but with the condition that it be used only by the authorities as investigation material or evidence in court and not to humiliate people or be posted on social media.

Beardy Hulk

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THE TRAINERS

A veteran media professional, **Geoffrey Pereira** has taken on various journalistic and media support roles in The Straits Times since 1986. Prior to that, he was a philosophy tutor at the National University of Singapore while working on his postgraduate degree.



A senior journalist at The Straits Times, **Shefali Rekhi** is also an editor at Asia News Network, an alliance of 23 news media. She is one of the key anchors in ST’s initiatives to fight fake news.

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Light sticks

More than 20 illuminated stick-like figures making up French design collective Groupe Laps' Keyframes at The Float @ Marina Bay, part of the installations on display at i Light Marina Bay Festival 2012.

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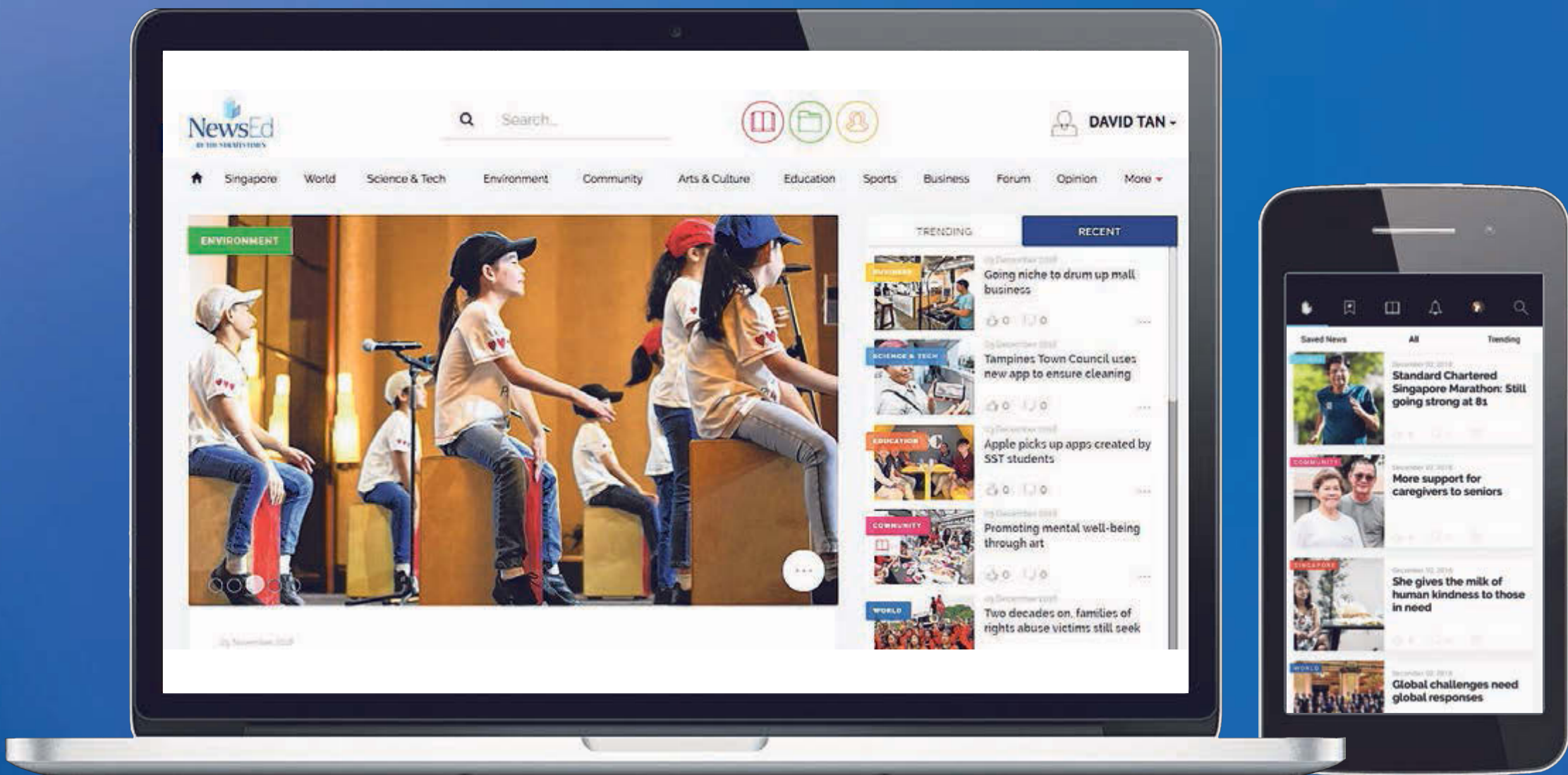
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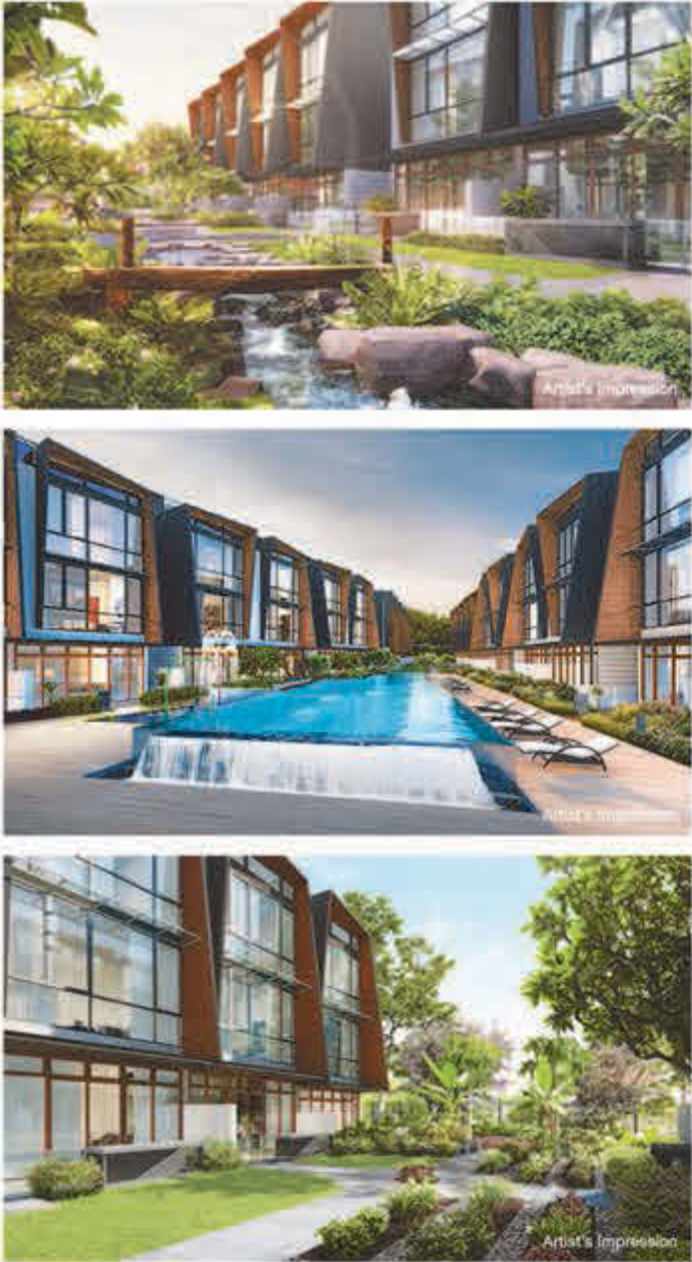
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C1 BUSINESS

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COMPARED WITH SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR C2

Debt-laden Newstead calls in liquidators

**Electronics retailer
owes creditors,
including its staff,
more than \$60m**

Irene Tham
Senior Tech Correspondent

Homegrown electronics retailer Newstead Technologies is winding up its business amid accumulated debts of more than \$60 million, The Straits Times has learnt.

Its debt mountain includes about \$4.7 million owed to Apple South Asia, while Newstead employees have around \$1.6 million outstanding owed to them, according to a preliminary list of 170 creditors seen by The Straits Times.

The appointed provisional liquidator, Mr Tee Wey Lih of Acres Advisory, confirmed the total claim amount, which it is still recovering.

"Repayment to creditors is dependent on how much we can recover from the assets of the company," Mr Tee said.

While declining to confirm the actual payout to creditors, he said that in accordance with the Companies' Act, the claims of employees are of higher priority. The payments are slated to take place in the first half of the year, he said.

Newstead sold off its 10 Nubox outlets to local Apple reseller Elush, which operates the iStudio and Epicentre stores, last November.

Sources said the sale might help to reduce the amount owed to Ap-



Newstead was established in 1998 with its first shops at Sim Lim Square and the old Funan DigitalLife Mall. Its last major move involved setting up at Marina Square Mall in mid-2016 following the closure of the old Funan complex. It will cease all retail operations by the end of the month. PHOTO: CMG

ple, which declined to comment when contacted.

Newstead now operates two outlets – at Nex@Serangoon and Jurong Point – after a restructuring.

It will cease all retail operations by the end of the month.

It had more than 40 outlets at the peak of its business.

Its troubles mean that Funan DigitalLife Mall will not have Newstead as an anchor IT tenant when the refurbished centre re-opens in the next few months, said a spokesman

for CapitalLand, which manages Funan.

The retailer had originally intended to occupy multiple concept stores spread across 15,000 sq ft at the new mall.

The mall's confirmed IT and con-

sumer electronics tenants include AddOn Systems, TK Foto and GamePro, the spokesman added.

Other Newstead creditors include government agencies such as the Comptroller of GST and GovTech, which are claiming half a mil-

\$4.7m

Amount Newstead owes Apple South Asia. It also owes its employees about \$1.6 million, according to a preliminary list of 170 creditors.

lion dollars combined.

Some unusual creditors include cosmetics retailers Estee Lauder Cosmetics and Fragrance Du Bois, as well as vehicle-leasing service provider Mercedes-Benz Financial Services Singapore, which has since been renamed Daimler Financial Services Africa & Asia Pacific.

Liquidation experts said these parties could be customers which had paid a deposit, or advertisers that had paid in advance for services.

Newstead was established in 1998 with its first shops at Sim Lim Square and the old Funan DigitalLife Mall.

Its last major move involved setting up at Marina Square Mall in mid-2016 following the closure of the old Funan complex.

It occupied 10,000 sq ft of space at Marina Square and had its own DigitalStyle and @notebook.com outlet and concept stores which it operated for computer brands Asus, Dell, HP and Lenovo before their sudden closures late last year.

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January new home sales down 17.8%

Industry players cite post-festive Christmas lethargy and earlier CNY as reasons for fall in demand

Grace Leong
Business Correspondent

The post-festive Christmas lethargy and the prospect of an earlier Chinese New Year hit home sales in January.

Developers sold 433 homes in the month, down 17.8 per cent on the 527 moved in January last year, and 28 per cent below December's tally of 602 sales.

January is typically a slow month, given the many holidays around this time of the year. Sales may also be feeling the lingering effects of the July 6 cooling measures.

Cushman & Wakefield's senior research director Christine Li said yesterday: "Buyers are just taking their

time to shop around for the best options. The urgency to secure their choice units is no longer there."

"Although there is a large pipeline of launches, current market sentiment is stronger compared to the post TDSR-period, when there was a lot of uncertainty," she added, referring to the total debt servicing ratio.

Developers released 498 private homes in January, well up on the 101 in December and about 97 per cent above the 253 launched in January last year, Urban Redevelopment Authority data showed yesterday.

There were no new launches in the city fringes or suburbs but three in the prime district - Fourth Avenue Residences in Bukit Timah, Fyve Derbyshire in Derbyshire Road and RV Altitude in River Valley Road.

"That reflects developers' confidence in launching units in a segment where buyers tend to be more price-sensitive," said Mr Ong Teck

Hui, senior director of research & consultancy at JLL.

The three projects accounted for 24 per cent of January sales.

Huttons Asia's research head Lee Sze Teck noted: "The last time sales in the (prime district) accounted for more than 20 per cent of monthly sales was in March 2016."

More than 4,000 new luxury homes could be launch-ready this year, added OrangeTee & Tie's head of research and consultancy Christine Sun.

"The increased number of luxury homes sold indicates that buyers are generally still upbeat about the market, given that household incomes rose across the board last year and our GDP is still positive," she said.

Older launches continue to find favour with buyers.

Affinity At Serangoon sold 54 units in January at a median price of \$1,496 per sq ft (psf).

The sales momentum has continued to build this month, with the an-

nouncement of the first phase of the Cross Island MRT line, said ERA Realty's key executive officer Eugene Lim.

The mass market project is near the proposed Serangoon North MRT station.

January's top sellers included Fourth Avenue Residences, with 74 units moved at a median price of \$2,412 psf, and Parc Esta, where 32 homes sold at a median price of \$1,745 psf.

Stirling Residences was also popular, with 22 transactions at a median price of \$1,761 psf, while Parc Botannia recorded 21 sales at a median price of \$1,384 psf.

But the executive condominium (EC) market saw markedly less action due to the low number of new units for sale and the lack of new launches since April last year.

ZACD Group executive director Nicholas Mak noted that only one EC unit sold in January, adding: "The total inventory of unsold EC units dropped to a record low of just five units as of January this year."

"There was only one EC project launched in 2018, the 628-unit Rivercove Residences. The supply and demand imbalance will continue to put upward pressure on prices."

"The sales of new ECs will only increase when the next project, located along Sumang Walk, is launched, which is expected to be in the second quarter of 2019."

gleong@sph.com.sg

Better pay for WSQ trainees

Joanna Seow
Manpower Correspondent

A national training and certification system has continued to boost the wages and likelihood of employment for trainees, a study by government economists has found.

People who completed bite-sized Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) modules had real wages that were 0.8 per cent higher on average in the year after training, compared with those who had not attended training under the scheme.

The benefits were greater for those who achieved a WSQ full qualification through completing several modules. They had an average real wage premium of 5.8 per cent in the year after training.

These findings were published in the Economic Survey of Singapore report released yesterday by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. They are similar to an earlier study which found that WSQ trainees enjoyed higher wages.

Singapore Human Resources Institute president Erman Tan said the WSQ system can give people a foundation and unlock their potential in new areas.

The challenge, said Institute for Human Resource Professionals chief executive Mayank Parekh, is for the system to keep up with the skills needed as jobs evolve at an ever faster pace.

For the latest study, economists Marsha Teo and Wen Jia Ying examined data from SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) - which funds WSQ programmes and awards the certification - on all trainees who received a full qualification or a statement of achievement after completing a module from 2011 to 2016. They also looked at wages and workplace characteristics over time.

The economists found that besides the wage improvements, trainees who were not working during the year they received training were also more likely to be employed in the following year than people who did not attend training.

On average, those who received a statement of achievement were 3.5 percentage points more likely to be employed, while those who received a full qualification were 2.6 percentage points more likely to be employed.

But they noted that productivity and wage gains from training may take time to materialise. For example, trainees who gain new skills and switch firms may take a pay cut in return for possible higher wages in the future.

For Ms Irene Loo, 40, taking a WSQ diploma in tourism a decade ago helped her learn about other parts of the hotel industry beyond the food and beverage department she worked in.

Now a restaurant manager, she said: "It's important to expose myself to other skills like marketing and training other people."

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Tertiary students to benefit from PayPal's fintech programme

Derek Wong

Online payments giant PayPal will introduce financial technology modules at Singapore tertiary institutions over the next three years under a programme that will benefit more than 1,700 students in information and communications technology courses.

The US company will be working with five polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) to introduce industry-based applied learning through four modules, it was announced yesterday.

Students will be able to use their technical knowledge by applying PayPal's payment solutions in industry projects or internships.

The programme will start with the Singapore Polytechnic and ITE this year before it is rolled out to the other schools over the next three years.

Singapore Poly principal and chief executive Soh Wai Wah said the programme would strengthen Singapore's financial technology ecosystem: "Fintech is fast gaining momentum in today's economy, and the polytechnics and ITE are committed to nurture a pool of skilled talents for the sector."

Mr David Stock, CEO of PayPal Pte Ltd, said the programme would help meet demand for talent and assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) here.

"We want to help empower local tech talents with industry knowledge and cultivate a future-ready workforce that can meet the needs of SMEs, which are looking to digitalise their businesses," said Mr Stock, who also noted that the idea started from a conversation he had with Education Minister Ong Ye Kung three years ago.

PayPal's international headquarters, which is at Suntec City, has been based in Singapore for more



Education Minister Ong Ye Kung (centre) speaking to a PayPal employee at its international headquarters in Singapore. The American company is partnering with tertiary institutes in a programme where students will learn to apply PayPal's payment solutions in industry projects or internships. PHOTO: PAYPAL

than a decade.

The company's payments platform has 267 million active account holders and is available in more than 200 markets.

The initiative with local schools comes amid a push for a national cashless system. More than 80 per

cent of consumers have adopted e-payments, and almost 60 per cent of merchants accept such payments.

The memorandum of understanding between PayPal and the educational institutes was signed at the Suntec Convention Centre yesterday.

Mr Ong, who is also on the board of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, was on hand to watch the event.

He noted: "The e-payment landscape is changing quickly, and we have yet to fully realise its potential in Singapore."

"Programmes such as this will help by expanding the pool of talent who can support companies looking to digitalise their business, including embarking on e-payments."

wderek@sph.com.sg



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Notice of Books Closure Date & Payment Date for the Cash Distribution Amount of 0.0238 Singapore dollars per Unit

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Important Dates and Times

Ex-Cash Distribution date and time	21 February 2019 at 9.00 a.m.
Books closure date and time	22 February 2019 at 5.00 p.m.
Payment date	1 March 2019

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14 February 2019

¹ Please refer to the announcement released on 18 January 2019 via SGXNET for more details on the computation of the Net Proceeds and the amounts retained after the payment of the Special Distribution.

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Hyflux chief ‘deeply saddened’ by investors’ pain

Company board, in letter to SGX, notes that Olivia Lum will also suffer significant loss

Marissa Lee

Hyflux chief executive Olivia Lum is “deeply saddened” over the “pain and loss” suffered by those who invested in or lent money to the now-insolvent company.

Ms Lum also noted that she too will “suffer a significant loss – her personal net worth is tied inextricably to her stake in Hyflux”, the company said in an 18-page statement to the Singapore Exchange (SGX) yesterday.

It came in response to an open letter from the investor watchdog on Monday.

Mr David Gerald, president of the Securities Investors Association (Singapore) or Sias, wrote that Ms Lum had received more than \$60 million in dividends from her 34 per cent shareholding in Hyflux, “in the time that shareholders and bondholders have seen their entire investment destroyed”.

The board responded that Ms Lum did not receive any cash dividend for the 2017 financial year. However, the board failed to mention that in February last year, Ms Lum received a dividend in specie, amounting to a 23.8 per cent stake in Hyflux’s smaller consumer water business, Hyfluxshop.

The board, which is chaired by Ms Lum, said: “Over a period of 10 years from 2007 to 2016, she received about \$58 million in proportional cash dividends declared and paid to shareholders. During the same period (2007 to 2016), Hyflux

recorded cumulative profit after tax and minority interests of \$527 million, and total ordinary shareholders’ dividends was \$186 million.”

Mr Gerald had also asked why the Hyflux board was still paying annual dividends up to 2017, when the water-treatment firm’s operating cash flow has been negative since 2009, while more debt was piled on.

The board said that paying dividends out of non-cash profits is not against the law: “Prior to 2017, Hyflux had been recording net profits, thus resulting in significant retained earnings, allowing it to declare dividends on an annual basis. These dividends were reflective of the year’s profit achieved.”

Hyflux had also conducted share buybacks at prices above its net asset value per share until November 2015, which many bondholders have found distasteful in hindsight.

Mr Gerald also questioned why

\$58m

What Ms Lum received in proportional cash dividends declared and paid to shareholders over a period of 10 years, from 2007 to 2016, according to the Hyflux board.

“it appears to us... that almost every Hyflux asset has material faults and defects”. For instance, the Qurayyat and Magtaa projects cannot operate at or close to capacity, the Tuaspring and Tianjin Dagang plants are loss-making and cannot service their debt with cash flow from operations, he said.

The board replied: “As in all development projects, it is not uncommon for projects to experience operational issues.”

In the case of Tianjin Dagang, the board blamed “local financial industry regulations which resulted in a mismatch of the loan tenure to the concession period”.

In any case, Hyflux had regularly provided updates on its assets, the board argued.

The board also asserted that the company’s collapse was due largely to its investment in the Tuaspring Integrated Water and Power Project in Singapore.

“When the Tuaspring project was awarded in 2011, the outlook for the Singapore power market was very favourable.

“Today, however, due to over-supply of gas... the average wholesale electricity price has dropped from about \$220 per MWh in 2011 to an average of \$81 per MWh in 2017, resulting in significant losses from electricity generation.”

The board did not address why it was unable to adjust its strategy, given that projected outcomes did not turn out as planned.

Hyflux is expected to release a proposed restructuring plan to creditors, including retail perpetual and preference shareholders, by today.

marilee@sph.com.sg



Six adjoining strata offices are up for sale at International Plaza in Tanjong Pagar. The refurbished units have a combined floor area of about 6,469 sq ft and a guide price of \$11.97 million. ST FILE PHOTO

6 strata offices for sale at International Plaza

A batch of six adjoining and refurbished strata offices at International Plaza in Tanjong Pagar is up for sale with a guide price of \$11.97 million.

The offices are available on a sale and leaseback scheme with immediate annual gross rental yield of 4.2 per cent for at least five years, said marketing agent Colliers International yesterday. The guide price

works out to \$1,850 per sq ft (psf) based on floor area.

Colliers said this “compares favourably” with the average price of \$1,895 psf achieved for 13 office transactions at International Plaza over the past six months. The six offices have a combined floor area of about 6,469 sq ft and a 99-year leasehold tenure in effect since 1970.

The commercial use zoning means foreigners are eligible to buy. Additional buyer’s stamp duty and seller’s stamp duty are also not applicable, Colliers said.

Mr Steven Tan, director, capital markets and investment services, at Colliers International, said: “We believe the offices... will appeal to astute investors who are looking to capitalise on the tight CBD office space supply situation over the next few years and are keeping an eye on potential upside opportunities over the longer term, as the government’s plans to develop the nearby Greater Southern Waterfront unfold.”



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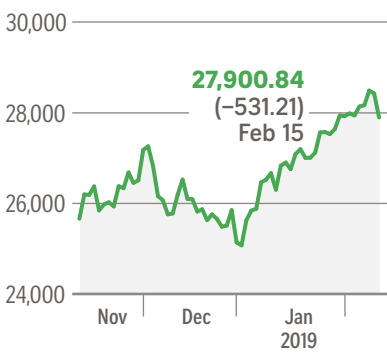
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Hang Seng



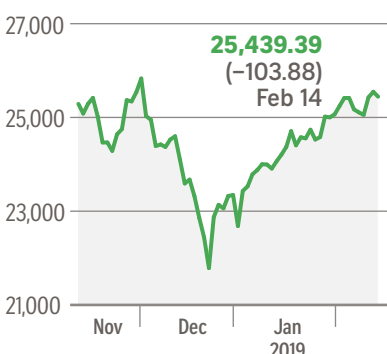
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BullsAndBears

US-China trade row casts shadow on STI

Weak data from world's two biggest economies adds to investors' concerns

Leila Lai

There was bad news all around for markets yesterday with weak data from the world's two largest economies and reports that negotiators were struggling to compromise on key trade issues in Beijing.

One set of numbers from the United States showed retail sales in December suffered their biggest drop in more than nine years, raising fears of a slowing economy.

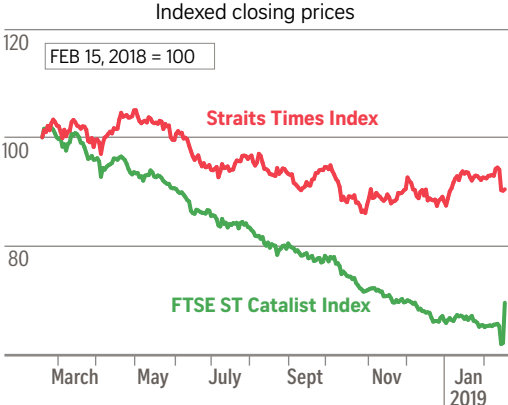
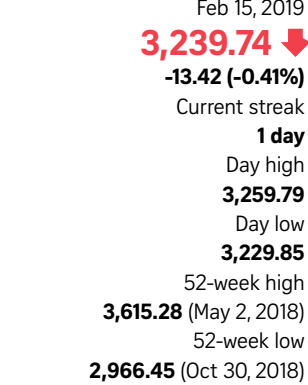
China's weakened factory prices indicated softening demand and the prospect of deflation returning. And the US-China trade talks wrapped up with the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg citing anonymous sources as saying there had been little progress.

Markets are now hoping President Donald Trump will delay the March 1 tariff deadline.

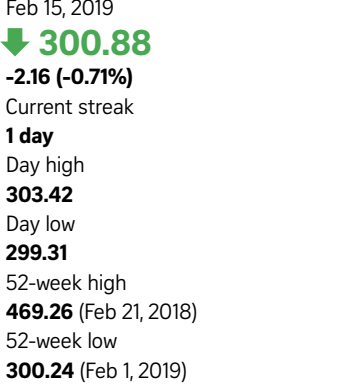
A lengthened period of talks "could calm markets as it will buy time for China to press on with structural reforms and carry out stimulus to counterbalance the impact of potential loss in exports", CMC Markets analyst Margaret Yang said. "Whereas for US companies, extending the tariff deadline will allow time to adapt to changes in a new trade environment."

This left investors on the ropes and the Straits Times Index (STI)

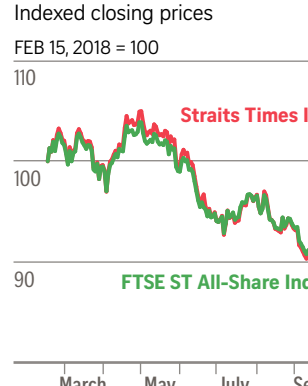
Straits Times Index



FTSE ST Catalyst Index



FTSE ST All-Share Index



falling 13.42 points or 0.41 per cent to 3,239.74. However, earlier gains, like the hefty 1.36 per cent boost on Wednesday, helped the STI close 1.18 per cent higher for the week.

Turnover was 1.42 billion shares worth \$1.12 billion, with losers outnumbering gainers 249 to 165.

Spirits firm ThaiBev led actives after noting on Thursday night that it had doubled first-quarter earnings.

The stock closed at a seven-month high of 81.5 cents, up 13.19 per cent on volume of 106.4 million.

Real estate investment trusts (REITs) were popular, with Ascendas

Reit picking up 0.36 per cent to \$2.76 on 13.9 million units traded.

Capitaland Commercial Trust and Mapletree Logistics Trust also rose, on trade of about 12 million units each.

REITs were among the best-performing sectors in November, December and January, the Singapore Exchange noted. They were the top net buy sector in January, with net institutional inflows of \$82.7 million. "Analysts have noted revived investor interest in S-REITs since the fourth quarter of 2018, driven by a flight to safety... as trade tensions (simmered), and global equity markets remained volatile."

PhillipCapital analyst Tara Wong yesterday said the brokerage remains neutral on the sector, with preferences for the commercial and hospitality sub-sectors. It is cautious on retail, as sales and shopper footfall "leave much to be desired".

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Creative posts \$6.7m loss for Q2 on lower revenue

Singapore-listed Creative Technology sank deeper into the red in the second quarter on the back of lower revenue.

The group recorded a net loss of US\$4.9 million (\$\$6.7 million) for the three months to Dec 31 compared with a net loss of US\$4.2 million a year earlier.

Turnover fell 22 per cent to US\$16.2 million due to "uncertain and difficult market conditions, which affected sales", it reported on Thursday night. Gross profit fell 18 per cent to US\$4.8 million.

Loss per share came in at seven US cents compared with six US cents a year earlier. No dividend was declared for the quarter.

Creative said it expected no significant change in market conditions, which remained challenging.

Revenue was likely to be lower in this non-holiday season quarter, and the group expected to report an operating loss.

Revenue contribution from Super X-Fi products for the quarter was not expected to be significant to overall group turnover, it added.

In February, wholly-owned subsidiary ZiiLabs settled certain patent infringement lawsuits filed in the United States.

"The settlement sum of US\$17.9 million will be recognised by the group as other income in the current quarter. This will offset the operating loss and is expected to result in a net profit for the current quarter," said Creative.

Creative shares fell 10.51 per cent to \$4.94 yesterday.

Straits Times Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD %	P/BV	
278	245	Ascendas Reit	276	+1	13891	5.8	1.3	
192	161	CapitaCom Trust	187	+1	13746	4.7	1	
380	298	Capitaland	336	-4	5023	3.6	0.7	
243	196	CapitaMall Trust	239	+1	7976	4.8	1.2	
1359	780	CityDev	941	-9	2364	1.9	0.8	
251	196	ComfortDelGro	240	cd	3	7937	4.4	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2479	-18	4885	5.8	1.4	
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US898	+8	653	2.3	-	
133	85.5	Genting Sing	108	-2	25591	3.2	1.7	
37	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	26	+0.5	12353	3.1	0.6	
37	23	HPH Trust USD	US25	cd	10.5	6279	10.5	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US711	-3	1414	2.8	0.3	
7089	1099	JMH USD	US7051	-19	349	2.3	0.8	
4078	3155	JSH USD	US3863	-42	385	0.8	0.4	
3828	2766	Jardine C&C	3610	-22	333	3.2	1.8	
835	567	Keppel Corp	608	cd	-3	1442	4.9	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1152	-16	3361	3.2	1.2	
564	455	SATS	506	-2	1752	3.6	3.5	
779	672	SGX	779	+7	3982	3.9	9.7	
1184	914	SIA	976	-11	1482	4.1	0.9	
292	231	SPH	248	-1	1994	5.2	1.1	
378	321	ST Engineering	371	-7	3628	4	5.4	
341	243	Sembcorp Ind	257	-4	2752	1.9	0.7	
358	283	Singtel	299	+4	22234	6.9	1.7	
88	57.5	ThaiBev	81.5	+9.5	106444	0.8	4	
3037	2380	UOB	2568	-17	1976	3.9	1.2	
898	591	UOL	660	-5	1567	2.7	0.6	
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1610	-20	1045	3.7	2.1	
335	297	Wilmar Intl	330	unch	4640	3	1	
154	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	140	-2	15244	3.2	0.5	

FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK		COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST		+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
HIGH	LOW		TRADED	SALE				
278	245	Ascendas Reit	276	+	1	13891	5.8	1.3
120	105	Ascott Reit	113	unch	1	4318	6.3	1.1
74.5	59	Bumitama Agri	68	-1	73	1.1	1.6	1.1
178	143	CDL HTrust	158	+1	1	1411	-	1.1
192	161	CapitaCom Trust	187	+1	1	13746	4.7	1.7
380	298	Capitaland	336	-4	4	5023	3.6	0.2
243	196	CapitaMall Trust	239	+1	1	7976	4.8	1.2
164	133	CapitaR China Tr.	143	+4	2517	7.1	0.9	0.8
1359	780	CityDev	941	-9	2364	1.9	0.8	0.9
251	196	ComfortDelGro	240	cd	3	7937	4.4	1.4
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2479	-18	4885	5.8	1.4	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US898	+8	653	2.3	-	-
73.5	59	Far East HTrust	64	cd	unch	10367	-	0.7
183	150	First Resources	172	-2	245	4	2.2	-
231	212	Fraser Cpt Tr	228	+4	1580	5.3	109.6	-
112	101	Fraser L&I Tr	111	unch	6810	6.2	1.2	-
133	85.5	Genting Sing	108	-2	25591	3.2	1.7	-
37	22.5	Golden Agri-Res.	26	+0.5	12353	3.1	0.6	-
224	167	GuocoLand Ltd	186	unch	88	3.8	0.6	-
37	23	HPH Trust USD	US25	cd	unch	6279	10.5	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US711	-3	1414	2.8	0.3	-
7089	1099	JMH USD	US7051	-19	349	2.3	0.8	-
4078	3155	JSH USD	US3863	-42	385	0.8	0.4	-
3828	2766	Jardine C&C	3610	-22	333	3.2	1.8	-
835	567	Kepp Infra Tr	50.5	+0.5	14279	7.4	1.8	-
124	108	Keppel Corp	608	cd	-3	1442	4.9	1
215	151	Keppel Reit	122	+1	7477	4.6	0.9	-
215	151	MI	204	cd	unch	2902	5.5	3.6
273	170	Man Oriental USD	US207	+4	236	1.4	1.5	-
186	152	Mapletree Com Tr	179	+3	3603	5.1	1.3	-
206	184	Mapletree Ind Tr	199	cd	unch	1983	5.9	1.3
140	118	Mapletree Log Tr	139	+2	11313	5.5	1.2	-
128	107	Mapletree NAC Tr	125	+2	5659	6	0.9	-
83	73	NetLink NBN Tr	80.5	unch	3215	-	1	-
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1152	-16	3361	3.2	1.2	-
199	136	OUE	158	+3	502	1.9	0.4	-
87	64.5	OUE HTrust	71.5	+0.5	1455	-	1	-
250	157	Olam Intl	193	unch	877	3.9	1	-
59	28	Oxley	32	+1	6307	4.7	0.9	-
291	256	ParkwayLife Reit	280	+1	799	4.6	1.5	-
121	98	Raffles Medical	111	+1	849	2	2.6	-
564	455	SATS	506	-2	1752	3.6	3.5	-
779	672	SGX	779	+7	3982	3.9	9.7	-
1184	914	SIA	976	-11	1482	4.1	0.9	-
336	220	SIA Engineering	232	-3	975	5.6	1.7	-
292	231	SPH	248	-1	1994	5.2	1.1	-
103	98	SPHREIT	102	unch	334	5.4	1.1	-
378	321	ST Engineering	371	-7	3628	4	5.4	-
341	243	Sembcorp Ind	257	-4	2752	1.9	0.7	-
269	149	Sembcorp Marine	160	-1	4317	1.3	1.4	-
58	39	Silverlake Axis	54.5	cd	+3	13400	5.5	7.9
144	88.5	SingPost	95.5	unch	2026	3.7	1.3	-
263	158	Singtel	299	-4	22234	6.9	1.7	-
74	63.5	StarHub	167	-23	20569	9.6	5.2	-
199	163	StarhillGbl Reit	69.5	+1.5	2111	6.5	0.8	-
199	163	Suntac Reit	190	+3	8939	5.3	0.9	-
88	57.5	ThaiBev	81.5	+9.5	106444	0.8	4	-
10.2	3.7	Thomson Medical	7.8	unch	14772	-	2.8	-
3037	2380	UOB	2568	-17	1976	3.9	1.2	-
898	591	UOL	660	-5	1567	2.7	0.6	-
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1610	-20	1045	3.7	2.1	-
335	297	Wilmar Intl	330	unch	4640	3	1	-
226	183	Wing Tai	204	+1	317	3.9	0.5	-
154	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	140	-2	15244	3.2	1	-
182	116	Yanlord Land	140	+1	2888	4.9	0.6	-

FTSE ST Small-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	LAST SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD %	P/BV	
145	129	AIMSAMP Cap Reit	138	unch	171	7.5	1	
68.5	48	Accordia Golf Tr	57	unch	288	6.8	0.6	
86.5	74	Ascendas-hTrust	85	unch	385	-	0.9	
119	99	Ascendas-iTrust	112	+1	771	5.4	1.3	
58	12.2	Asian Pay TV Tr	13.2	+0.1	4762	49.2	0.2	
64	48	Banyan Tree	59	-0.5	463	1.7	0.8	
333	115	Best World	325	-2	3109	1.3	11.6	
85.5	76	Boustead	81	unch	30	3.7	1.2	
126	79.5	BreadTalk	88	-1	162	8	2.3	
632	521	Bukit Sembawang	568	+5	143	3.2	1.1	
87	65.5	Cache Log Trust	71.5	+0.5	967	8.3	1.1	
52	39.5	Centurion	40.5	unch	28	6.2	0.7	
166	104	China Aviation	126	-2	885	3.6	1.1	
46	29.5	China Everbright	33.5	-1	2226	1.5	0.6	
165	90.5	China Sunshine	130	-1	1344	23	15	
103	64	Chip Eng Seng	70.5	unch	2005	5.7	0.6	
53.5	31.5	Cosco	35.5	-0.5	1542	-	15	
700	302	Delong	573	-9	15	-	0.6	
27.5	17.5	Duty Free Intl	20	unch	43	9.3	1.3	
77	67.5	EC World Reit	74	-0.5	186	8.1	0.9	
59	47	ESR-REIT	53.5	+0.5	4546	7.2	1.1	
140	92	First Reit	105	unch	553	8.2	1	
152	135	Fraser Com Tr	149	+3	3101	6.4	1	
80	66.5	Fraser HTrust	73	+0.5	118	-	1	
25.5	16.4	Geo Energy Res	19.4	-0.1	172	5.2	1.1	
91	70.5	HRnetGroup	79.5	-0.5	1411	2.9	2.4	
67.5	52	Health Mgt Intl	57	cd	-0.5	108	0.6	
279	73	Hi-P Intl	100	-3	6597	25	15	
283	252	Hong Leong Fin	269	-3	269	4.8	0.6	
80.5	71	IREIT Global	76	+0.5	117	7.8	1.1	
37	18.3	Indofood Agri	21.5	unch	470	-	0.3	
84	43	Japfa	79	-1.5	2624	0.6	15	
76.5	49	KSH	53	+1	22	4.2	0.9	
85	53	Kep-KBS Reit USD	66.5	-0.5	387	9.4	0.6	
149	128	Keppel DC Reit	145	unch	2006	5	14	
189	132	Keppel T&T	188	+1	74	-	1.2	
11.9	7	KrisEnergy	8	-0.2	6987	-	1	
71	44.5	Lian Beng	49	+0.5	359	4.6	0.4	
40.5	18	Lippo Malls Tr	23.5	unch	2243	14.6	0.9	
53	28.5	MM2 Asia	28.5	-1.5	1187	-	1.6	
95	69.5	ManulifeReit USD	87	cd	+0.5	2504	6.4	0.8
120	95	Metro	99	-0.5	296	5.1	0.6	
21	5	Noble	8.1	susp	-	-	-	
63.4	45	OUÉ Com Reit	50	+1	1790	7	0.7	
66	54	PEC	56.5	unch	31	3.5	0.6	
39.5	17	POSH	18.3	-0.1	390	-	0.5	
64.5	44.5	Q&M Dental	48	+1.5	326	3.4	3.4	
110	55.5	QAF Ltd	71	+1	104	7	0.8	
124	96	Riverstone	113	+1	11	2	3.7	
54.5	22	SIIC Environment	35.5	+0.5	264	-	0.6	
45	38.5	Sabana Reit	42.5	+1	316	7.5	0.7	
119	91	Seng Siang	108	unch	915	3.1	6	
25.5	3.3	Shio Grandness	6.2	-0.1	4619	-	0.1	
69	56	SoilbuildBzReit	60	-0.5	328	8.8	1	
129	80.5	Tianjin ZX USD	90.5	-2	127	-	0.7	
46.5	32.5	Tuan Sing	38.5	cd	unch	81	2.3	0.4
136	54	UMS	67	-1.5	3141	7.5	1.6	
112	58.5	Valuetronics	69	-2	7055	6.6	1.5	
15	8.3	Ying Li Intl	12.3	-0.1	5595	-	0.3	
48.5	24	Yoma Strategic	34.5	unch	2167	0.7	0.9	
33	16.1	Yongnam	17.3	+0.1	345	-	0.3	

Konnectivity, a Keppel Corp-SPH joint venture which is majority owned by Keppel, said last night that obtaining majority control of M1 is the first step in the transformational journey that the mobile operator will embark on to enhance its competitiveness. ST FILE PHOTO



Keppel Corp, SPH get majority control of M1

Axiata accepts their joint offer of \$2.06 a share for its 28.6% stake

Keppel Corporation, with Singapore Press Holdings (SPH), has obtained majority control of telco M1. This follows Axiata Group Bhd's acceptance of their joint offer of \$2.06 per share for its entire stake of 28.6 per cent. Axiata is a long-term shareholder of M1. The joint offer for M1 has now turned unconditional and the remaining shareholders will have till 5.30pm on March 4 to accept the

\$2.06-a-share offer. Konnectivity, a joint venture between the two companies which is majority owned by Keppel, said last night that obtaining majority control of M1 is the first step in the transformational journey that M1 will embark on to enhance its competitiveness. As of 5pm yesterday, the shares owned, controlled or agreed to be acquired by Konnectivity and its concert parties, as well as the valid acceptances of the offer amounted to 707 million shares. This represented 76.35 per cent of the total number of shares and 75.52 per cent of the maximum potential is-

sued share capital of M1. Mr Loh Chin Hua, CEO of Keppel Corp, said: "We are very pleased that we will, together with SPH, be in a position to steer M1 during this critical period in its journey. "The increasingly challenging and competitive market conditions in the Singapore telecommunications sector require M1 to take bold steps to transform." M1 is Singapore's third-largest mobile operator, after Singtel and StarHub. The latest milestone comes after Keppel Corp and SPH announced in December last year their "firm

intention" to make a voluntary general offer of \$2.06 per share for the remaining M1 shares that they do not own. At the time of the voluntary general offer, Keppel Corp, one of the founding shareholders of M1, owned 19.3 per cent of M1 through its subsidiary Keppel Telecommunications & Transportation, while SPH had a 13.45 per cent stake. Mr Ng Yat Chung, CEO of SPH, said: "We see opportunities to leverage on M1's mobile platform to offer on demand and ready digital content to better serve our customers. This transaction is part of SPH's ongoing objective to enhance long-term value for our shareholders." Mr Loh added: "We will work with M1's management to develop and implement new strategic and operational plans to sharpen its competitive edge, increase its momentum in digital transformation and undertake growth initiatives." He also said M1 complements Keppel Corp's mission to provide solutions for sustainable urbanisation.

Gojek said to be seeking adviser in \$4b funding drive

HONG KONG • Gojek, Indonesia's most valuable start-up, is choosing an adviser to help with fund-raising as it expands rapidly in the competitive South-east Asian ride-hailing industry, people with knowledge of the matter said. The firm recently asked investment banks to pitch for a role working on its ongoing financing round, according to the people, who asked not to be identified. Gojek could seek to bring in as much as US\$2 billion in additional capital from new investors, the people said, which would take the total haul from the current round to around US\$3 billion (S\$4.1 billion). Gojek had already raised just over US\$1 billion at the first close of the ongoing Series F round, Bloomberg News reported earlier this month. Mitsubishi Corp and Provident Capital also participated, alongside existing investors Google, JD.com and

Tencent Holdings. The Jakarta-based start-up is intensifying its push against larger rival Grab. The two most valuable start-ups in South-east Asia are going head-to-head in everything from ride hailing to mobile payments and food delivery in Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. Grab said last month that it raised more than US\$3 billion last year as part of its Series H financing round. South-east Asia's Internet companies raised US\$9.1 billion from venture capitalists, private equity firms and corporate investors in the first half of last year, a sum headed for an all-time record, according to a report from Google and Temasek Holdings. The region's ride-hailing market is expected to reach US\$28 billion by 2025 from an estimated US\$7.7 billion last year, the report shows. BLOOMBERG

The firm recently asked investment banks to pitch for a role working on its ongoing financing round, according to the people, who asked not to be identified because the information is private. Gojek could seek to bring in as much as US\$2 billion in additional capital from new investors... which would take the total haul from the current round to around US\$3 billion (S\$4.1 billion).

Interbank currency rates

Currencies	Against \$	Feb 15 Bid	Offer	Against US\$	Feb 15 Bid	Offer
S\$ / US\$ to one unit of foreign currency:						
Australian dollar	0.9628	0.9633	0.7086	0.7088		
Canadian dollar	1.0208	1.0214	0.7515	0.7513		
Euro	1.5325	1.5332	1.1279	1.1281		
NZ dollar	0.9269	0.9277	0.6822	0.6826		
Sterling pound	1.7402	1.7413	1.2808	1.2812		
US dollar	1.3587	1.3591	-	-		
S\$ / US\$ to 100 units of foreign currency:						
Chinese renminbi	20.0407	20.0513	14.7499	14.7534		
Danish kroner	20.5425	20.5516	15.1192	15.1215		
Hong Kong dollar	1.731	1.732	12.7427	12.7429		
Indian Rupee	1.90	1.90	1.3599	1.4006		
Indonesian rupiah	0.0096	0.0096	0.0071	0.0071		
Japanese yen	12.915	12.922	0.9064	0.9066		
Korean won	0.1202	0.1204	0.0884	0.0886		
Malaysian ringgit	3.324	3.328	24.4618	24.4588		
New Taiwan dollar	4.4034	4.4059	3.2409	3.2418		
Norwegian krone	15.6682	15.6782	11.5318	11.5358		
Philippine peso	2.5895	2.5927	1.9059	1.9077		
Saudi riyal	36.2272	36.2407	26.6631	26.6652		
Swedish krona	14.5952	14.6042	10.7421	10.7455		
Swiss franc	1.350731	1.351666	99.4135	99.4530		
Thai Baht	4.3423	4.3449	3.1953	3.1969		

Government securities

GOVERNMENT BONDS						
Period	Issue code	Coupon rate (%)	Maturity	Close Bid	High	Day's Low
2-Year	NY05100N	3.250%	01-Sep-20	101.97	101.99	101.99
5-Year	NS19100A	2.000%	01-Feb-24	100.15	100.18	100.15
10-Year	NX18100A	2.625%	01-May-28	104.19	104.30	104.20
15-Year	NZ13100V	3.375%	01-Sep-33	112.32	112.25	112.25
20-Year	NZ16100X	2.250%	01-Aug-36	97.51	97.70	97.50
30-Year	NA16100H	2.750%	01-Mar-46	103.25	0.00	0.00

Note: Based on latest issue

Source: Monetary Authority of Singapore

MSCI INDICES

Feb 14	Index	% chg	In local curr % chg
World Preliminary	1569.4	-0.2	8.9
EAFE Preliminary	1081.2	-0.1	7.3
Europe Preliminary	1508.7	-0.1	7.4
Australia	1214.1	-0.1	6.4
Austria Preliminary	535.5	-1.6	7.5
Belgium Preliminary	1002.3	-1.4	9.6
Canada Preliminary	2005.3	0.6	9.5
Denmark Preliminary	8079.1	0.9	9.1
Finland Preliminary	727.7	-0.1	11.4
France Preliminary	1830.5	-0.2	6.8
Germany Preliminary	885.4	-0.6	4.9
Greece Preliminary	46.4	0.3	7.0
India	1248.2	-0.3	-1.1
Indonesia	7168.2	-0.6	1.3
Ireland Preliminary	195.8	-0.9	9.2
Israel Preliminary	253.0	-0.1	9.7
Italy Preliminary	671.2	-0.7	7.9
Japan	951.2	0.0	6.5
Korea	670.1	1.3	10.9
Malaysia	586.0	0.2	0.7
Netherlands Preliminary	1621.1	0.2	11.2
New Zealand	141.9	-0.9	6.9
Norway Preliminary	2940.1	-0.8	5.6
Pakistan	404.8	0.5	13.4
Philippines	1356.7	0.9	7.5
Portugal Preliminary	86.6	1.5	7.2
Singapore	1689.5	0.2	6.0
Singapore Free	363.3	0.2	6.0

Source: MSCI

Company Briefs

Challenger Technologies

Challenger Technologies yesterday posted a 2 per cent decrease in net profit to \$5.7 million for the fourth quarter ended Dec 31, 2018. Revenue slipped 6 per cent to \$83.9 million due to lower contribution from IT products and services, which fell 6.6 per cent from a year ago. This was mainly a result of lower revenue contribution from trade-show sales and retail operations. The fall was partly offset by stronger revenue growth in corporate sales. Revenue from the telephonic call centre and data management services improved by 26.7 per cent to \$1.9 million in the fourth quarter. Contribution from the electronic signage services business segment increased to \$0.5 million compared to \$0.2 million a year ago. Challenger blamed the slowdown in Q4 on weak retail sentiment arising from global uncertainties such as trade wars and Brexit. Earnings per share came in at 1.66 cents, compared with 1.69 cents a year ago. The group has proposed a final dividend of two cents per share for FY2018. Together with the interim dividend of 1.1 cents, this would amount to a total dividend of 3.1 cents per share for the financial year.

Millennium & Copthorne Hotels

London-listed Millennium & Copthorne Hotels (M&C) has posted a fourth-quarter net loss of £5 million (S\$8.7 million), compared to a net profit of £32 million the year before. This was on the back of net revaluation and impairment losses. Losses per share were at 1.7 pence, down from earnings per share of 9.8 pence the year before. The M&C board is recommending a final ordinary dividend of 2.15 pence per share, down from 4.42 pence per share the year before. Together with the interim ordinary dividend of 2.08 pence per share, which remains unchanged from the year before, the total ordinary dividend for the year is 4.23 pence per share. Shareholders are expected to be paid on May 17. M&C saw revenue rise to £267 million, up from £260 million the year before, with contributions from its hotel business which posted a 3.9 per cent or £9 million rise in revenue to £240 million from £231 million the year before. This was offset by losses in its property and Reits business, which garnered revenues of £10 million and £17 million respectively, compared with £11 million and £18 million respectively, the year before. For the full year, net profit was down to £43 million from £124 million the year before.

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YUNE CHANG CHEN

Age: 88

passed away peacefully on 14 February 2019.

Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Wife: Sim Joo Hong (Deceased)

Siblings:

Hoon Cheong San (Deceased)

Yune Chang Yah

Woon Siang (Deceased)

Wan Wa Boon

Wan Siang Hau Patrick

Woon Chang Tai

Son:

Yune Tah Tee

Daughter:

Geannie Yune Buzby (Siow Fong)

Grandsons:

Yune Wei Tze, Deren

Yune Wei Hao, Devin

Yune Wei Yih, Dexter

Bradley Peter Buzby

Goddaughter:

Tan Joo Loo

Spouses:

Chai Chew Wah

Tan E. Joon

Rose Kwek

Tan Ngo Mei

Daughter-in-law:

Julie Wee

Son-in-law:

Peter Owen Buzby

Granddaughter:

Cassandra Yune Buzby

Godson-in-law:

Tan Thuan Boon

Nephews, nieces, grandnephews, grandnieces,
great-grandnephews and great-grandnieces.

Wake is held at Singapore Funeral Parlour, Lotus Room, Level 4,
91 Tampines Link, S(528746).

Cortege will leave on 18 February 2019 (Monday) at 3.15pm
for Mandai Crematorium Hall 4 for cremation at 4.15pm.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:6



Foo Jong Hua

Age: 86

Was called home to be with the Lord on 15 February 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Husband: Lim Hong Sim

Sons:

Chris Lim Yew Kang

Lim Yew Luan

Benjy Lim Yew Piew

Daughters:

Evelyn Lim Siew Fong

Tan-Lim Siew Hoon

Grandsons:

Nigel Lim Ming Xiang

Tan Elim

Lim E-Sean

Tan Ethan John

Daughters-in-law:

Fu Xiao Chan

Lim Bee Bee

Son-in-law:

Tan Pek Tong

Granddaughters:

Gayl Lim Pei Shan

Tan Etinne

Lim E-Ning

Lim E-En

And all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at The Garden of Remembrance,
The Chapel, 920 Old Choa Chu Kang Road, Singapore 698815.

Nightly church services will be held at 8.00pm.

Cortege leaves on Tuesday 19 February 2019 at 1.15pm
for Mandai Crematorium Hall 4 for cremation at 2.05pm.



Simon Pang Hock Guan

Age: 77

Was called home to be with the Lord on 14 February 2019. Dearly missed and remembered by loved ones.

Wife: Yap Sui Eng Mary

Sons & Daughters-in-law:

Pang Heng Yew Andrew

& Grawan Apasakrui

Pang Kheng Yew Anselm

& Duong Thi Hong Dao

Daughters & Sons-in-law:

Pang Mei Ling Magdalene

& Raymond Lim Chieng Keng

Pang Mei May Angeline

& Goh Chye Hock Derrick

Godson & Goddaughter-in-law:

Lim Eng Cheong & Ng Hwei Ping

Grandsons:

Lim Kai Siang Malcolm

Goh Kai Lun Brendon

Granddaughters

& Grandson-in-law:

Pang Yik Koong Allison

& Chen Kuang Bi Alvin

Pang Yik Qin Alicia

Pang Yoke Wei Chloe

Pang Yoke Qi Charlyn

Goh Ming Min Carissa

God-Granddaughter:

Lim Yu Ting

And all relatives and friends.

Wake at Block 4 Teck Whye

Avenue, Singapore 680004.

Nightly prayers at 8.00pm.

Cortege leaves on Monday

18 February 2019 at 11.30am for

Funeral Mass at St Joseph Church,

620 Upper Bukit Timah Road,

Singapore 678116 at 12.00pm,

thereafter to Mandai Crematorium

Hall 3 for cremation at 1.40pm.

We are Thinking of You

our Tan Gee Soon

left us on 16 Feb 2017

Gee Tuan & Winston,

Sons: Zhe Yin, Zhe Hui &

Zhe Min and all loved ones.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want."
Psalm 23:1



TANG SUN YAM PETER

Age: 78

was called home to be with the Lord on
14 February 2019, leaving behind loved ones.

Wife: Koh Leang Cheng Anna

Daughters:

Tang Lee Keng Pamela

Tang Lee Kun Josephine

Tang Lee Choo Pauline

Grandsons:

Tang Jing Sheng Damian

Tang Jing Hong Desmond

Toh Gen Yang Jeremy

Granddaughter:

Toh Yu Hao Valerie

Great Grandchildren:

Tang Peck Cheng Tiffany

Callan Tang

Colby Tang

Granddaughters-in-law:

Lai Siew Ling

Siu Fong Tung

Grandson-in-law:

Maheswaran S/O Ragoo

Wake is held at

Blk 624 Hougang Ave 8 S'pore 530624.

Nightly services will be held on

16 February 2019 to 19 February 2019 at 8pm.

Cortege leaves on 20 February 2019 (Wednesday) at 1.30pm

for funeral mass at Church of the Nativity of the Blessed

Virgin Mary, 1259 Upper Serangoon Rd, S'pore 534795 at

2pm and thereafter for burial at Choa Chu Kang Cemetery.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,
for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will
uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10



Michael Augustine

Age: 85

Was called home to be with the Lord on 15 February 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Wife: Sophie Anthony

Daughters:

Clara Michael A

Stella Michael

Necilla Rosaline Michael

Son:

Michael Simon

Sons-in-law:

B.N. George

Muniady

Ravind Ganesan

Daughter-in-law:

S. Malathi (deceased)

Grandchildren, grandchildren-in-law,

great-grandchildren, all relatives and friends.

Papa is resting at Block 204 Yishun Street 21, Singapore 760204.

Cortege leaves on Saturday 16 February 2019 at 12.30pm

for Funeral Service at Symrna Assembly at 1.00pm,

thereafter to Mandai Crematorium Hall 4

for cremation at 2.45pm.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7



Mrs Veronica D'Souza née Pasqual

Age: 99

Was called home to be with the Lord on 15 February 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Husband: Claude D'Souza (†)

Children:

Derrick

Claudia

Angela

Leonard

Gerard (†)

Grandchildren:

Denise

Pio

Great Grandchildren:

Alex & Ava

Spouses:

James Tan

Elena Lim

Spouse:

Penn Nee

And all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at Church of Our Lady of Lourdes,
Notredame Room, 50 Ophir Road, Singapore 188690.

Nightly prayers will be held at 8.00pm.

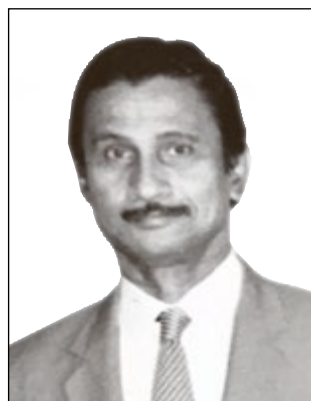
Cortege leaves on Monday 18 February 2019 at 2.15pm for

Funeral Mass at Church of the Holy Family, 6 Chapel Road,

Singapore 429509 at 3.00pm, thereafter cortege leaves for

cremation at Mandai Crematorium Hall 2 at 5.15pm.

The family requests no wreaths please.



BALAGANGADHARAN S/O KRISHNA NAIR

Age: 88

Passed away peacefully on 15 February 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones:

Wife:

Sharon Sivagami

Children:

Mathew Rajendran, Theresa Vimala,

Sukumar, Luke Krishnan

Their spouses, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Body is resting at Singapore Casket Parlour
131 Lavender Street, Level 3, Jade Room, Singapore
338737, on Saturday, 16 February 2019, from 9am.

Contact: 96641706 Sukumar

Cortege leaves on Sunday, 17 February 2019
at 4pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 4
for cremation at 5pm.

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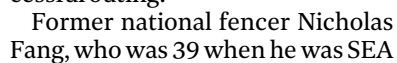
BARRY MAGUIRE

GEYLANG NEW BOY IS EX-DUTCH U-20 FOOTBALLER **C14**

Former fencer assisted by ex-athletes Teo, Chung in growing trend of younger heads

"While it is going to be challenging logistically, Valerie and Pei Ming will work tirelessly with me and the secretariat to provide in-

SNOC secretary-general Chris Chan said: "We have received positive feedback from the athletes and officials on the appointments of for-



"I hope to see these new CDMs not just be figureheads, but also give constructive advice to help the different NSAs improve and do well at the major Games."

Juliana Seow (centre) will be the Singapore contingent's chef de mission for the Philippines SEA Games. Chung Pei Ming and Valerie Teo will assist her. PHOTO: SNOG

davidlee@sph.com.sg

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SARRI'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED

Stubborn and inflexible, Italian's methods are not working and Jorginho is becoming a flop

Richard Jolly

If the competition has changed, so has the context.

When Manchester United visited Stamford Bridge in the Premier League in October, Chelsea were unbeaten and had dropped only four points.

As they meet again in the FA Cup on Monday, Chelsea are reeling from their heaviest defeat since 1991. Maurizio Sarri's last encounter with Mancunian opponents ended in a 6-0 reverse.

It highlighted problems at a club where history tends to repeat itself.

A decade ago, Luiz Felipe Scolari made a similarly fine start, but lost his way and, before long, his job.

The problems of a momentum shift, where impatience is institutionalised and where players are accustomed to managers coming and going, mean Sarri is imperilled.

A stubborn man has been predictable and inflexible.

"My target is to play my football (style)," he said after the loss to City. Yet that, he claimed, was not his football. Instead, Chelsea have the worst of both worlds, neither Sarri-ball nor success.

They have a defensive line that is too high and which scarcely suits the personnel – David Luiz is better in a back three, Marcos Alonso as a wing-back – while they try to press with players who are less equipped to do so, and less quick, than City's, Liverpool's or Tottenham's. Their narrowness means they

can be outflanked and Sarri's 4-3-3 is set in stone; he has been outwitted by managers whose plans can vary. Even his substitutions are the same: Ross Barkley for Mateo Kovacic, or vice versa.

The biggest issue concerns a flagship recruit who has been the face of the regime and, increasingly, a reason for its failings.

Until Gonzalo Higuain joined, Jorginho was both the only real Sarri signing and the manager's lone disciple.

Chelsea's results have deteriorated and his influence waned since opponents started man-marking him, persistent policemen preventing him from dictating play – it has been Aaron Ramsey, Dele Alli and David Brooks.

If Jesse Lingard is fit on Monday, he will surely take that role.

And, while Jorginho is a deep-lying midfielder, he is not a destructive one, so he does not actually protect the back four.

Meanwhile, the world's best defensive midfielder, N'Golo Kante, is used out of position in a more advanced role on the right.

The Frenchman has tried manfully to add goals and assists, but Chelsea could do with his skills as a nullifier against elite teams. Sarri, though, will not switch to a 4-2-3-1.

He has branded his players difficult to motivate. His criticisms are less personal than Jose Mourinho's before his 2015 sacking, so the mood is less toxic.

But an ageing squad contain several players with uncertain futures. They are not Sarri allies, but Chelsea face a decision whether to trust him with a major rebuild.

Their past suggests they will not.

stsports@sph.com.sg



PHOTOS: REUTERS

Key battles: Chelsea v Man United

DAVID LUIZ V ROMELU LUKAKU

Luiz endured one of his sporadic, spectacularly poor performances against City last week, but he is one of Chelsea's few leaders and is capable of galvanising them.

Lukaku never scored for Chelsea and has lost his place in Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's first-choice side, but has started both FA Cup games and set up two goals at Arsenal.

N'GOLO KANTE V PAUL POGBA

France's World Cup-winning midfielder Pogba has been a revelation for Solskjaer, despite his red card against Paris Saint-Germain. If he starts on the left of United's midfield trio or diamond, Kante should be positioned to follow his compatriot back.

Chelsea often struggle with the spaces either side of Jorginho when Kante is upfield.

GONZALO HIGUAIN V VICTOR LINDELOF

Higuain is looking for a hat-trick after winning the Italian Cup in 2017 and 2018. He is the lone Chelsea player who should be spared criticism for the 6-0 thrashing at the Etihad, where he came close to scoring.

Lindelof could not cope with Kylian Mbappe's pace on Tuesday. He faces a very different test in the slower, bulkier Higuain.

Richard Jolly



Chelsea's Ross Barkley (in yellow) scoring the first goal at Malmö's Swedbank Stadion during the Europa League last-32, first-leg clash on Thursday. The game ended 2-1 after Olivier Giroud added a second for the Blues and Anders Christiansen pulled one back for Malmö. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

ENGLISH FA CUP 5TH RD

YESTERDAY

QPR v Watford
Late kick-off

TODAY

Brighton v Derby
Singtel TV Ch111, 8.20pm
Wimbledon v Millwall
Ch111, 10.50pm
Newport v Man City
Ch111, tomorrow, 1.20am

TOMORROW

Bristol v Wolves
Ch112, 9pm
Doncaster v Crystal Palace
Ch111, 11.55pm
Swansea v Brentford
Ch112, 11.55pm

MONDAY

Chelsea v Manchester United
Ch111, Tuesday, 3.30am

TEAM ARE BEHIND MANAGER

Yes, (we have an) amazing future. We have had many meetings already asking if someone doesn't believe. Nobody said anything. It's because everyone believes.



DAVID LUIZ, Chelsea defender, insisting that the team still believe in 'Sarri-ball'.

Our team believe in the manager, says Luiz

LONDON • Chelsea defender David Luiz insists there has been no dressing-room revolt against manager Maurizio Sarri's tactics, despite their 6-0 Premier League mauling at Manchester City last weekend.

The Italian has been heavily criticised by pundits for refusing to adapt his 'Sarri-ball' style, even on the road against top opponents.

Tough games lie in wait for Sarri's men with the visit of Manchester United in the FA Cup fifth round on Monday, followed by a reunion with City in the League Cup final on

Feb 24, before meeting Tottenham in the league three days later.

The embarrassing manner of their heaviest defeat in 28 years has raised serious questions over his future just eight months into a three-year contract. The calls for his head will surely intensify should Chelsea fail to safely negotiate their way through the testing run.

But Luiz believes Sarri just needs time to implement his ideas, urging the same patience that was afforded to City boss Pep Guardiola and Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp when

they were first appointed.

The Brazil defender said: "Yes, (we have an) amazing future. We have had many meetings already asking if someone doesn't believe. Nobody said anything. It's because everyone believes."

"We lost against maybe the best team in the world at the moment in Manchester City."

"We lost a few matches because it is part of the process. The teams at the top of the table now are ones with managers who have been there for more than three years."

"There is a big difference when you have already understood everything, it is much easier to play football. We are in the right way to still improve to become a fantastic team."

But, with three consecutive away league defeats and given his team's propensity to capitulate, Sarri is understandably less optimistic as they prepare to welcome Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men to Stamford Bridge.

He added: "In the last period, we've had the problem of up and down, up and down."

"We need to have continuity and consistency, in the mental condition to be able to approach every match with the same level of application, determination and attention."

"You know very well that if you are in bad mental condition in England, in 10 days, you can lose three or four very important matches."

"So we need consistency. It's not easy, but we have to try." REUTERS

CHELSEA V MANCHESTER UNITED
Singtel TV Ch111, Tuesday, 3.30am



Barry Maguire training with his Geylang teammates at Tampines Meridian JC on Wednesday. He wants to guide and help them to do well for the club.
ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

MAGUIRE SEEKS SOARING START WITH GEYLANG

Ex-Utrecht and ex-Dutch youth international, out with injury for 2 years, wants to rebuild career

Wang Meng Meng

The smaller crowds and stadiums of the Singapore Premier League (SPL) are a world away from the bright lights of elite football in Eu-

A NEW BEGINNING

I wanted to come to Asia and start from zero... I just need a stable competition and club. Singapore is a very nice country and this looks like the perfect showcase for me.



BARRY MAGUIRE, Geylang's new signing, on why he joined them.

rope, but Barry Maguire sees his stint with Geylang International as a time to rebuild a career that is almost wrecked by injury.

The midfielder is the highest-profile signing for the upcoming SPL season, having played in the Dutch top-flight Eredivisie for FC Utrecht and VVV Venlo and represented the age-group teams of the Netherlands and Ireland.

But a double slipped disc – or prolapse – in his back in 2015 sidelined him for two seasons. He made only three appearances for Norwegian side Sarpsborg 08 then.

He then played for Dutch outfit TEC, and League of Ireland first-division side Limerick last year, before coming to Asia for the first time this year.

“This is a really good opportunity to showcase my skills and I have heard very positive things about the league here,” Maguire said. “I see myself as a good fit at the club and the first few weeks have proved that I am right in coming here.”

He made a good start for the Eagles, scoring in a 2-1 pre-season loss

to Malaysian Premier League side Negeri Sembilan last month and Geylang coach Noor Ali is satisfied with the 29-year-old.

The tactician said: “Barry has an impressive profile and my first impression of him is that he’s a top-class professional. He just came back from a serious back injury, but he looks good in the team.”

“He leads by example and, because he has played at a very high level, he is good technically and tactically sound with a good range of passes.”

At 19, he played in the Eredivisie for FC Utrecht (2008-2011). He also played in the top division for Venlo. In 2010, he played in the Europa League against Liverpool in the group stage, and also scored in a 4-0 play-off victory over Celtic.

Maguire represented Ireland’s U-16s and then the Netherlands’ U-18, U-19 and U-20 teams, where he played alongside future stars like Georginio Wijnaldum, Daley Blind and Leroy Fer.

But he does not want to live in the past. He is keen to re-establish him-

self in the SPL, saying: “When I got the injury, I was in rehabilitation for nine months. Later, I underwent surgery that kept me out for another seven months.”

“It will be hard to get back to that level (in Europe) and that’s why I wanted to come to Asia and start from zero.”

“A lot of agents know who I am, I just need a stable competition and club. Singapore is a very nice country and this looks like the perfect showcase for me.”

Despite being new, he is also expected to shoulder some leadership responsibility at Geylang.

Maguire said: “The standard here is good and I play for a good team. Even though the club have many young players, they are doing pretty good. It is my job to guide them and help them step up to get more minutes on the pitch.”

“I’m 29 now, so I have lots of experience to share. It’s a big job for me, but I want to guide and help my teammates to do well for the club.”

meng@sph.com.sg

Singapore football’s high-profile signings

KHALID HAMDAOUI

Highest level played: Netherlands Under-21s
Team in Singapore: Woodlands Wellington, 2013

MONSEF ZERKA

Morocco international
Tanjong Pagar, 2013-2014

EMILE MBOUH MBOUH

Cameroon 1990 World Cup
Tanjong Pagar, 1997

LEE KWAN WOO

South Korea international
Home United, 2013-2014

JERMAINE PENNANT

Liverpool, Arsenal
Tampines Rovers, 2016

MOHAMMAD KHAKPOUR, HAMID REZA ESTILI

Iran 1998 World Cup
Geylang International, 1996-97

GRANT HOLT

Norwich, Aston Villa
Sengkang Marine, now called Hougang United, 2002

Newport manager believes shock City victory possible

LONDON • Newport County manager Michael Flynn believes his side can conjure up the biggest shock in the history of the FA Cup when they host Premier League champions Manchester City in the fifth round today.

Following wins over Premier League club Leicester and the Championship’s Middlesbrough, Flynn’s League Two side are confident heading into the match at Rodney Parade – which has a capacity below 8,000 and, until a few years ago, was used exclusively for rugby matches.

“If we win this, whether it’s extra time or penalties... I don’t care how we do it, it will be the biggest shock in FA Cup history,” he said at his pre-match conference yesterday.

“It’s always a little bit easier when you’re at home. I wouldn’t even be contemplating a win if it was at the Etihad.

“Of course there can (be a shock). Otherwise I’d just turn up, give them the game and say, ‘Let’s shake hands’, and walk off.”

“My players have a knack of rising to the occasion and are a fantastic group.”

It may be a bold statement from Flynn, but Newport have survived some hard times – they were relegated from the Football League in 1988 and went out of business the following year.

Their old 25,000-capacity home, Somerton Park, was demolished in 1993 and became a housing estate.

The club were re-formed by fans and had to restart in the regional Hellenic League, then four tiers below the Football League, and the several moves of stadium led to their new nickname of “The Exiles”. Newport returned to the Football League in 2013 and have been in League Two ever since.

The Welsh side also have had moments of glory – they reached the quarter-finals of the European Cup Winners’ Cup in 1981 as Wales’ representatives.

But this is the first time the club have been in the FA Cup fifth round since 1949, when they lost to Portsmouth.

“It’s about enjoying the occasion and making sure the players go out there with the belief that they can cause problems for Man City and believing that we deserve to be there, because we do,” Flynn added.

“We want to cause Man City problems and give a good account of ourselves and then enjoy Saturday evening and look back on a fantastic day, win, lose or draw.”

REUTERS

NEWPORT V MAN CITY

Singtel TV Ch111, tomorrow, 1.20am

Bowlers spread festive cheer



National bowlers packing festive bundles which included provisions such as instant noodles, biscuits and oranges as they helped to spread some Chinese New Year cheer yesterday by volunteering for Project Uplift. Inspired by Singapore Bowling Federation president Jessie Phua, the national bowlers distributed the festive bundles to over 200 families in the Telok Blangah and Spooner Road estates. The initiative is organised by Carrying Moments, comprising Jazreel Tan, Shayna Ng, Bernice Lim, Daphne Tan, Cherie Tan, New Hui Fen, Joey Yeo and Charlene Lim.
PHOTO: SINGAPORE BOWLING

THE STRAITS TIMES

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

PRESENTED BY 100 PLUS



Joseph Schooling is delighted after winning the 50m butterfly at the Asian Games in Jakarta last August to complete a double.
ST FILE PHOTO

Nominee #5: Joseph Schooling (swimming)

Regaining the competitive fire

He has started Tokyo 2020 push and is happy with momentum

Nicole Chia

For Joseph Schooling, last year was memorable not just because he won two Asian Games golds five months after finishing his final National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I campaign without a medal.

It was also significant because of a “gradual feeling” around October or November, which led to this realisation: His competitive fire is back.

Revealing that he is now back to feeling annoyed whenever anyone tries to beat him in practice, he told The Straits Times: “Before it was kind of like, ‘I really don’t care, go for it dude’, but now it’s like, ‘OK, this does not fly well with me’.

“I feel a fire within me. My mind and body were telling me it’s time,

I’m ready to start my push towards Tokyo and all the meets on the way.

“It’s been a while.”

The 23-year-old feels he has built enough momentum towards defending his 100m butterfly Olympic title in Tokyo next year.

He said: “I’m happy with the progress I’ve made since the Olympic year through the Asian Games and now.

“Physically, I feel the best ever. The big thing is getting school out of the way and now my goal is to see how good I can actually become.”

2018 has also taught him a valuable lesson he feels has made him mentally stronger: That life does not always turn out as expected.

Reflecting on his medal-less NCAA outing after which he turned professional, he recalled having trained “the hardest ever” for it.

He said: “You put your body through crazy things day in and day out and you have this huge expectation in your head and, when you don’t hit it, it’s terrible.

“So if you go through things like that, you kind of figure out how to learn to view it in a different way and move on.”

Move on is what he did. In Jakarta last August, he retained his 100m fly title in an Asiad record of 51.04sec. He then went one better than his 50m fly silver in 2014 by winning the event the next day.

It is not the first time Schooling, whose 2018 achievements have earned him a nomination for The Straits Times Athlete of the Year award, has successfully moved on from a setback.

He once described the 2012 Olympics as the “lowest point” in his life, and almost gave it all up.

In London, he was rattled by a last-minute equipment change before his 200m fly heat and eventually clocked more than two seconds off his personal best, falling short of his semi-final target.

Explaining how that experience helped last year, he said: “I just used

ALL SYSTEMS GO

Physically, I feel the best ever. The big thing is getting school out of the way and now my goal is to see how good I can actually become.



JOSEPH SCHOOLING, 2016 Olympic 100m butterfly champion, on his preparations to defend his title next year.

the same way you get over anything. Put that behind you, find certain things or outcomes you weren’t happy with, use that to motivate you to go to practise and swim faster.

“It’s the same thing on repeat, just using different scenarios and different situations.”

His mother, May, is proud of the way he persevered through difficult times last year.

She said: “It was tough getting back and he had to put in a lot of training to lose the weight.

“But he put his mind to it, he really focused on what he wanted to do and we can only support him in whatever he does.

Her son has never been comfortable losing. Perhaps this discomfort is what will lead him back to the pinnacle of the sport next year.

nicole@sph.com.sg

SCAN TO WATCH
ST Athlete of the Year nominee, Joseph Schooling: str.sg/aotyschooling



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CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL NOMINEES FOR THE STRAITS TIMES ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

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SUNWOLVES READY TO BATTLE THE SHARKS

Japanese side eye another South African scalp at National Stadium in season-opener

Xener Gill

The Sunwolves finished last in the 15-team Super Rugby last year, but the highlight of their season was improving their win rate to three from two in 2017 and one in 2016. Two of the wins last year came against two South African sides, the Bulls in their only home match in Singapore, and the Stormers. The Japanese side will open their 2019 season against another South African team, the Sharks, at the National Stadium today (6.55pm) and they are hoping to repeat their success last year. "They're a very good side, very physical, and very well-drilled,"

said Sunwolves' co-captain Craig Millar, 28, at the captain's run yesterday. "We know we're in for an awesome battle. "We've hit a good run against South African teams in places like this so we're looking to work harder." The Sunwolves need to be on top of their game if they hope to beat the Sharks, who were eighth last season. The team will mostly be expatriates because some key Japanese players will be unavailable owing to the Rugby World Cup in September. Head coach Tony Brown will not be guiding his charges tonight owing to commitments with the Japa-

nese national team. Assistant coach Scott Hansen will stand in for the New Zealander. "We've picked the best team and how it's been picked is through practice in pre-season. We also have players back from injury," said Hansen. The Sunwolves believe that the pre-season training camp in Melbourne has set them up nicely for the campaign. "Being able to get out of the Japanese winter briefly before our first game is just going to be massive for us going forward," said Millar. "It's little things like that that go a really long way in terms of preparing a team and getting your foundation ready for the first game." The Sharks are looking forward to playing an expansive game tonight. "To get into the play-offs, you have to score tries and your offen-

sive system has to be very good," said Sharks head coach Robert du Preez. "There have been big improvements for us in not only creating opportunities but also executing those opportunities." Captain Louis Schreuder added: "We want to score tries because the only way you can win is if you score tries. We also want to keep the people entertained, to play for our fans and for each other." When asked about the Sunwolves' approach, Hansen said: "We've talked about doing what we can to disrupt the ball and source, fronting up to them physically and being dominant. Rugby can be quite a simple game if you get that part right." xenerg@sph.com.sg

• For Sunwolves-Sharks tickets: www.sportshub.com.sg/SuperRugby

The Sunwolves players getting a feel of the National Stadium pitch yesterday. They will face the Sharks today in their opening game of the 2019 Super Rugby season. PHOTO: SINGAPORE SPORTS HUB



InGoodConscience Banks for the memories: Pele



Rob Hughes

"Go-oal!" Pele admits he began to shout. And then, and for 49 years since, the Brazilian has repeated his disbelief that "the Phantom" goalkeeper reached, never mind saved, that header.

To die a legend is one thing: To be remembered above and beyond that as a fine human being caps that. Of all the tributes to Gordon Banks after he died at age 81 on Tuesday, the words from Pele cannot be surpassed. "Rest in peace, my friend," the Brazilian wrote. "Yes, you were a goalkeeper with magic. But you were so much more. You were a fine human being." Pele is the best footballer to have played the game. He scored more than a thousand goals, and he was in his prime the day that Banks deprived him of one of his very best, in Guadalajara during the 1970 World Cup that Mexico hosted. For those of a certain age, it needs no refresher. For anyone under 50, there is always the video. The leap from Pele, the timing of his downward header, were as athletically perfect as man could get. The anticipation, the agility, the dive towards his right-hand post by Banks were denial made art. Somehow, the goalkeeper read the mind of the great Brazilian. Diving almost horizontal to the ground, Banks somehow reached that ball as it bounced, flicking it up by his fingertips, up and over the bar.

"Go-oal!" Pele admits he began to shout. And then, and for 49 years since, the Brazilian has repeated his disbelief that "the Phantom" goalkeeper reached, never mind saved, that header. Again, Pele finds words beyond what we might expect from a man of action. "For many, their memory of Gordon Banks is defined by the save he made against me. I understand why. "But my memory of Gordon is not defined by that. It is defined by friendship... I am glad he saved it, because that act was the start of a friendship between us I will always treasure." The extraordinary save was not what made Gordon the "Banks of England". That came four years earlier when he was his country's last line of defence in 1966, the only time in history that England, the country that codified the rules of modern football, won the World Cup.



Brazilian legend Pele and former England goalkeeper Gordon Banks embracing at a 2004 news conference in London for the announcement of Fifa's 125 greatest living footballers. Not surprisingly, both were in the list. PHOTO: REUTERS

Someone, somewhere, has the medal that Banks received for that once-in-a-lifetime achievement. Like others, he sold it, at auction to an anonymous buyer. The £124,750 (\$217,000) that medal fetched in 2001 was a record at the time, subsequently beaten by the £164,000 paid for the medal of Alan Ball. The players of 1966 earned buttons compared to today, and Banks and Ball cashed in their medals to put their children on a home-owning path. Banks and his wife Ursula, whom he met during his military service in Germany, gave daughters Julia and Wendy and son Robert equal shares to put down deposits on homes. "I would rather see them happy while I am still alive," he said, "than leave it to them in a will." He was neither rich nor poor. The medal could not be divided three ways. Banks, who lost sight in one

eye in a car crash in 1972 (and later twice suffered kidney failure), never presumed talent was a ticket to wealth. Three of his 1966 colleagues – captain Bobby Moore, Ball and Ray Wilson – pre-deceased him. And Wilson, Nobby Stiles and Martin Peters all became victims of dementia. By comparison, Banks had crystal-clear memories of where he came from. Born the son of a Sheffield steel worker, he left school at 15 to work as a "bagger", lifting coal bags onto a cart, and then a bricklayer's hod carrier. Tough labour, building upper body strength. He played schools football for Yorkshire, and his first break was being asked to step out of the crowd when an amateur league custodian failed to show up. Banks was discarded after two games for Rawmarsh Welfare, whose manager told him not to bother to turn up again. The first game had been a 12-2 hammering. What Rawmarsh didn't see was the determination, the hours spent studying angles and positioning, the will to persevere. The rest, as they say, is history. Alan Mullery, the Tottenham player who was supposed to mark Pele at the 1970 World Cup, said of the great save: "I patted Banksy on the head, and said, 'Why didn't you catch it?'. The abuse that came back was unbelievable!" Mullery remembers what we might forget. "When people talk of Guadalajara," he says, "they don't realise he was (only) 6-foot (1.83m) and had such a long way to get across the goal. 'Keepers today are 6ft 7 or 6ft 8 (2.02m) and not many would make that save." Pele's Phantom goalkeeper.

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SportsWorld

Koen and Josh earn Czech doubles title

Singapore paddlers Koen Pang and Josh Chua clinched the junior boys' doubles title at the 2019 ITTF Czech Junior & Cadet Open yesterday after beating Maciej Kolodziejczyk of Austria and Vladislav Ursu of Moldova 11-7, 13-11, 11-9. In the semi-finals, Koen and Josh, both 17, cruised to a 11-4, 11-6, 11-8 victory over Czech pair Frantisek Onderka and Radek Skala. Singapore will compete in the team events (junior boys and girls, cadet boys and girls) that started yesterday.

Arsenal lose in Europa League

LONDON • Arsenal suffered a shock 1-0 Europa League last-32, first-leg defeat at Bate Borisov on Thursday. Bate's Stanislav Dragun scored the winner when he nodded a free kick past the English Premier League club's goalkeeper Petr Cech seconds before half-time. REUTERS

Another season for Barca coach Valverde

BARCELONA • Barcelona have extended coach Ernesto Valverde's contract by another year until the end of the 2019-20 season with an option for one more season, the Spanish LaLiga club said yesterday. The 55-year-old guided Barcelona to the league and Cup double last season and has so far won 65 of his 96 games in charge in all competitions. REUTERS

Chile joins S. America 2030 World Cup bid

BUENOS AIRES • Chile joined three neighbouring South American countries in a bid to host the 2030 football World Cup, according to a joint statement from their governments on Thursday. The bid, which previously included only Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, is up against bids from England, and another bid from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The tournament will mark the centennial of football's most important championship first held in Uruguay in 1930. REUTERS

Spieth, Kang lead rain-affected event

LOS ANGELES • Three-time Major winner Jordan Spieth and South Korean Kang Sung topped the leaderboard on Thursday when darkness halted play in the weather-hit Genesis Open, where tournament host Tiger Woods never even got to tee off. Spieth was on five under after 12 holes of the first round and Kang was also on five under after the 14th hole at Riviera Country Club, where heavy rain saw the first round get under way in earnest seven hours late. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

On-court tirade costs Kerr \$34,000

LOS ANGELES • Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr was fined US\$25,000 (\$34,000) by the National Basketball Association on Thursday, following his rant at officials during his team's defeat by the Portland Trail Blazers. Kerr needed to be escorted from the court at Portland's Moda Centre on Wednesday, after angrily objecting to a flagrant foul called against Draymond Green. He was assessed two technical fouls and ejected after slamming his clipboard to the ground and unleashing a verbal volley against official Kenny Mauer. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DOLPHINS, STINGRAYS DIVE INTO UNKNOWN

Favourites wary of new rule to field Under-21 players as Netball Super League starts today

Laura Chia

Champions Blaze Dolphins are aiming to be the first Netball Super League (NSL) team to win back-to-back titles since the Magic Marlins, who were champions from 2011-2013.

But, while they can count former Singapore internationals like Micky Lin, Premila Hirubalan and Chen Huifen among their ranks, the Dolphins are taking nothing for granted for the season-opener against the Sneakers Stingrays at Our Tampines Hub today.

Former national captain Lin said: "Every year, everything changes so I really don't know. With the inclusion of the Under-21 players, it may shift things a little, too."

She is referring to this campaign's rule change, which requires the six teams to field at least two U-21 players for at least half of each match.

She said: "It goes back to our training sessions the past few months. We're trying different combinations and a lot of it involves our U-21 players as well."

Stingrays coach Goh Seck Tuck has to strategise how best to utilise his four U-21 players.



He said: "Whether we win or not, it will be interesting. I'm all prepared for it as a coach and we never go into a game thinking we're going to lose."

"But it will really depend on the players - who's more geared up, who's stronger and who's hungrier."

Stingrays and national player Toh Kai Wei added: "The team have been focusing on strengthening connections and understanding on court. We've also put in extra time for fitness to ensure our bodies will be in an ideal state this weekend."

"I feel nervous, but I hope the

adrenaline rush will help me perform to my best."

For new side Llabten Narwhals, who play the Mission Mannas today, coach Huang Po Chin is focusing on her team's improvement.

"As it's the first time we're competing as a team, we're looking at how the individuals come together and progress from there," said Huang, who is targeting a semi-final spot. "Our approach is to be consistent, regardless of who we're facing. If we can achieve our goal too, that will be great."

claura@sph.com.sg

NETBALL SUPER LEAGUE 2019 OPENING DAY

2pm Blaze Dolphins v Sneakers Stingrays

4pm Magic Marlins v Swifts Barracudas

6pm Llabten Narwhals v Mission Mannas

VENUE Our Tampines Hub

The Sneakers Stingrays and the Blaze Dolphins facing off in a 2018 M1 Netball Super League match. They will tip off the 2019 season at Our Tampines Hub at 2pm today. NETBALL SINGAPORE FILE PHOTO

Kuchar defends US\$5,000 payment to Mexican caddie

LOS ANGELES • Matt Kuchar, who has earned more than US\$45 million (S\$61.1 million) as a professional golfer, went to Mexico last fall in search of his first victory in four years - and a local caddie who could help him get it.

He found both. But that happy ending has quickly dissolved into a scandal that casts the 40-year-old as an ugly American and a particularly shameless elitist in a country-club sport.

Kuchar has been accused of fleecing his caddie in Mexico, David Giral Ortiz, by paying him a tiny fraction of what the job usually yields when the boss wins US\$1.3 million, as Kuchar did at the Mayakoba Classic in November.

In a typical PGA Tour arrangement, a caddie gets a flat rate of US\$1,500 for the event, which helps cover expenses, and a bonus worth 10 per cent of the golfer's winnings.

For Ortiz, who is also known as El Tucan, that would have meant about US\$130,000. Instead, he told Michael Bamberger of Golf.com, that he received only US\$5,000.

Kuchar confirmed it, but defended the payout, telling the website: "For a guy who makes US\$200 a day, a US\$5,000 week is a really big week."

Ortiz said the two had agreed on US\$3,000 plus an unspecified amount of his winnings, while Kuchar said he had promised Ortiz US\$1,000 for a missed cut, US\$2,000 for a made cut, US\$3,000 for a top-20 finish and US\$4,000 for a top-10 finish, with no specifications for a win.

"The extra US\$1,000 was, 'Thank you - it was a great week'," Kuchar told Golf.com.

"Those were the terms. He was in



Matt Kuchar's Mayakoba Classic win in Mexico earned him US\$1.3 million (S\$1.78 million). But he paid his caddie David Giral Ortiz US\$5,000, which he said was \$1,000 more than what they agreed on. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

agreement with those terms.

"I certainly don't lose sleep over this. This is something that I'm quite happy with, and I was really happy for him to have a great week and make a good sum of money."

He and Ortiz had never worked together before but, Kuchar, who added the tournament to his schedule on a whim, needed a substitute for his regular American caddie.

Questions about their arrangement soon surfaced on social media, and indignation began building against Kuchar, who has been considered one of the more affable players on the Tour.

At the recent Phoenix Open, fans

at the typically raucous 16th hole chanted, "Pay your caddie", when it was Kuchar's turn to hit.

A few players, like Tom Gillis, who competes on the PGA Tour Champions for seniors, have taken Kuchar to task on Twitter.

"What would Jack or Arnie have done in this situation???" he tweeted, referring to two of the game's greats, Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer. "Seized the opportunity to change a man's life."

Kuchar's peers, who are playing with him this week at the Genesis Open at the Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles, have largely chosen to avoid the issue or, when given the

veil of anonymity, have said his parsimony does not represent the majority of professional golfers.

Marc Graubart, a Houston resident who regularly employs Ortiz during golf vacations in Mexico, said he happened to be with him last month after questions about his compensation surfaced.

They saw Kuchar, who was in Hawaii to play at the Tournament of Champions and the Sony Open, telling reporters that he had paid Ortiz more than US\$3,000 for his services and less than 10 per cent of his total earnings.

Graubart said in a telephone interview on Thursday he had quizzed Ortiz about the details of his unwritten agreement with Kuchar.

He then explained the typical pay scale to Ortiz, who seemed unaware that he could have earned more money.

Graubart said he and a friend helped Ortiz write e-mails to Kuchar's agent, Mark Steinberg, requesting more compensation.

In a Jan 23 e-mail, which The New York Times obtained, Ortiz wrote that he had asked Kuchar for a percentage of his first-place cheque if he were to win.

The existence of the e-mails was first reported by Golf.com.

"Matt said 'Sure' with a smile," Ortiz wrote in the e-mail, "not believing that he would actually win the tournament."

A few days later, Graubart said, Ortiz received an offer of US\$20,000 from a tournament director who appeared to be acting on behalf of Steinberg.

Graubart said Ortiz had requested US\$50,000, and the caddie wrote an e-mail asking if he could deal directly with Steinberg, who replied: "I am out of the country. What Matt has offered is fair."

Some golf fans disagree.

A GoFundMe account has been set up on Ortiz's behalf, with the goal of raising the US\$50,000 he has been unable to collect from Kuchar.

As of yesterday, the amount raised was US\$2,226. NYTIMES

\$61m

Career prize money the 40-year-old Matt Kuchar has earned as a professional golfer.

Furore over US\$700 caddy fee at 2003 Singapore Masters

For seven days, Osman Juaini carried the bag of Zhang Lianwei at the 2003 Caltex Singapore Masters.

Hours after the China golfer won the US\$150,030 (S\$204,000) top prize, the part-time caddie received just US\$700, in seven hundred-dollar bills, al-

though the two did not make an agreement over payment.

There was a furore when news broke over the treatment of Osman, a storekeeper.

The title sponsor stepped in to give him a S\$2,000 cheque in recognition of his contribution to Zhang's victory.

The player later sent him a cheque for another US\$5,000 through the Asian Tour.

Zhang said later that it was all a misunderstanding, adding: "I had told my caddie that I would give him more. But it had to be later. Because at the time I had only US\$700 on me."

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS				
Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Sat, 16 Feb 2019				
A League	Adelaide	Western Sydney	4.50pm	LW
Spanish League	Celta de Vigo	Levante	8.00pm	LW
English Cup	Brighton	Derby	8.30pm	LW
German League	Stuttgart	RB Leipzig	10.30pm	LW
German League	Schalke 04	Freiburg	10.30pm	LW
English Cup	AFC Wimbledon	Millwall	11.00pm	LW
English League Champ	Aston Villa	West Bromwich	11.00pm	LW
Spanish League	Vallecano	Atletico Madrid	11.15pm	LW
Sun, 17 Feb 2019				
Italian League	Cagliari	Parma	1.00am	LW
English Cup	Newport	Manchester City	1.30am	LW
German League	Hertha Berlin	Werder Bremen	1.30am	LW
Spanish League	Sociedad	Leganes	1.30am	LW
Dutch League	Heerenveen	PSV	2.45am	LW
Italian League	Atalanta	Milan	3.30am	LW
Spanish League	Barcelona	Valladolid	3.45am	LW

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Thu, 14 Feb 2019 Draw No. 3449/2019

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Next Draw Mon, 18 Feb 2019

Group 1 Prize

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6.30pm

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SEMENYA INSISTS SHE'S A WOMAN, WANTS RESPECT

World champ bullish before CAS hearing where IAAF is set to argue new rule will level playing field

JOHANNESBURG • South African 800m Olympic champion Caster Semenya said on Thursday she is “unquestionably a woman”, after the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) denied reports that it would argue that she should be classified as a biological male.

Semenya, 28, issued the statement ahead of a landmark hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) next week that will challenge a proposed rule by the IAAF aiming to restrict testosterone levels in female runners.

“Ms Semenya is unquestionably a woman. She is a heroine and an in-

spiration to many around the world,” her lawyers said in a statement.

“Her case is about the rights of women who are born as women, reared and socialised as women, who have been legally recognised as women for their entire lives, who have always competed in athletics as women.

“She asks that she be respected and treated as any other athlete.”

The rules would force so-called “hyperandrogenic” athletes or those with “differences of sexual development” (DSD) to keep testosterone levels below a prescribed amount.

They were supposed to have been instituted in November last year but have been put on ice pending next week’s hearings.

Supported by the South African athletics federation, the two-time

Olympic champion in the 800m (2012, 2016) and three-time world champion (2009, 2011, 2017) in the same event has denounced the proposals.

“I just want to run naturally, the way I was born. It is not fair that I am told I must change. It is not fair that people question who I am,” she said previously.

Semenya’s legal team added: “She looks forward to responding to the IAAF at the upcoming CAS hearing... Her genetic gift should be celebrated, not discriminated against.”

As well as Semenya, the silver and bronze medallists of the 800m at the Rio Olympics, Francine Niyonsaba of Burundi and Kenya’s Margaret Wambui, have also faced questions about their testosterone levels.

“The IAAF is not classifying any DSD athlete as male,” the IAAF said in a statement.

“But, to preserve fair competition in the female category, it is necessary to require DSD athletes to reduce their testosterone down to female levels.”

A CAS spokesman confirmed on Thursday that the hearing is scheduled for next week in Lausanne from Monday to Friday with Semenya in attendance.

As mentioned in its statement, IAAF lawyers are expected to argue that, though Semenya and other DSD athletes are classified as women, they have male genes and testes and should take measures to ensure a level playing field.

Jonathan Taylor, the IAAF’s lawyer, said that women with normal female testosterone levels will not have any chance to win in competitions if Semenya is successful at the CAS. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, THE TIMES, LONDON

FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Her case is about the rights of women who are born as women, reared and socialised as women, who have been legally recognised as women for their entire lives, who have always competed in athletics as women.



CASTER SEMENYA’S LAWYERS, ahead of a landmark hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport next week to challenge a proposed IAAF rule to restrict testosterone levels in female runners.

Team LeBron pairing doubtful after Davis’ injury

NEW ORLEANS • LeBron James laughed off the tampering jokes when he picked Anthony Davis as his first pick among the reserves during last week’s All-Star Draft, but the forward remains dead serious about wanting the big man to join him in Los Angeles.

The feeling is mutual, with the allure of teaming up with James and turning the Lakers into National Basketball Association (NBA) championship contenders behind Davis’ trade request.

While the New Orleans Pelicans did not accede to his demand and kept hold of him past tradeline day, the basketball world had been anticipating how Davis would fare alongside James for the first time.

In a preview of what might transpire in the summer, the centre had been set to turn out for Team LeBron in tomorrow’s All-Star Game in Charlotte.

However, that is now in doubt after ESPN reported that he suffered a muscle bruise in a collision with Thunder forward Nerlens Noel in the first half of the Pelicans’ 131-122 win over the visiting Oklahoma City Thunder on Thursday.

Thunder guard Russell Westbrook led all scorers with 44 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists for his 11th straight triple-double and Pelicans centre Julius Randle paced his team with 33 points.

While a source told ESPN’s Ramona Shelburne that the injury was “nothing too bad”, Davis, who is still scheduled to travel to the All-Star game, “will see how he feels before deciding whether he can play”.

Although the player had 14 points and four boards in 16 minutes before being forced out, Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry flared up over the news that he had left the Smoothie King Centre with Rich Paul, the agent he shares with James, before the game had ended.

He said: “I’m happy for all of them. Because to tell you the truth, this whole thing has been a dumpster fire...”

“We want guys to be professional and we want them to do this, but it’s hard for guys to go through what

they’ve been through.

“To be able to come out and beat a team of that quality, I’m happy for all the guys. I just thought they did a great job.”

Asked if Davis’ premature departure had irked him, Gentry insisted he was “happy for the guys that played the game and we won” before leaving in a huff.

Given the Davis’ fractured relationship with the Pelicans, Charles Barkley believes that it is only a matter of time before the 25-year-old dons the purple and gold uniform.

According to several tweets from the Washington Post’s Ben Golliher, the NBA great told him post-game that “the fix is in”.

Barkley added: “At some point, Anthony Davis is going to be with the Lakers. I said that when he signed with Klutch (Sports Group). I actually got a call from Rich Paul.

“I said, ‘You know he’s going to the Lakers’.” AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



14

Anthony Davis (above) had 14 points and four boards in 16 minutes, before being forced out by injury in the New Orleans Pelicans’ 131-122 win over the visiting Oklahoma City Thunder.



New Orleans Pelicans guard Jrue Holiday preparing to shoot as Oklahoma City Thunder forward Nerlens Noel defends at the Smoothie King Centre on Thursday. The Pelicans centre Anthony Davis played only 16 minutes, after suffering a muscle bruise in a collision with Noel. PHOTO: REUTERS

A Game of Two Halves

Sazali Abdul Aziz and David Lee discuss the future of under-pressure Maurizio Sarri and the impact of young football coaches in Singapore: <http://str.sg/oEgC>



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Wada non-compliance may hit Olympic joint bid

SEOUL • The World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) said North Korea’s testing programme has failed to comply with its code, threatening to derail a joint Korean bid for the 2032 summer Olympics.

Wada gave Pyongyang four months to address doping concerns raised in a review in September, but the agency announced late on Wednesday that the deadline to correct “non-conformities” had passed without reply from the reclusive regime.

“The World Anti-Doping Agency announces that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) Anti-Doping Committee is, effective today, non-compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code,” the Montreal-based agency said, using North Korea’s official name.

The concerns related to the implementation of its testing programme, it added.

Wada’s decision casts a shadow on Seoul’s ambitious bid to jointly host the 2032 Olympics with a North Korean city, likely its capital Pyongyang.

Any country submitting a bid is required to be in compliance with Wada’s code.

North Korean athletes could also be excluded from competing in the Olympics or other international competitions, under Wada rules requiring them to conform with the code “as a condition of such participation”.

However, at a meeting in Lausanne between South and North officials yesterday, the two nations also expressed their interest for a joint march at next year’s Tokyo Olympic Games, as well as fielding some unified teams in different sports.

South and North Korea were buoyed by the role the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics played in easing tensions – they had marched together at the opening ceremony for the first time since the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin.

In recent months, the two Koreas have also turned to sports diplomacy to ease tensions.

In Pyeongchang last year, North Korea sent leader Kim Jong Un’s sister, Kim Yo Jong, to express the regime’s interest in an inter-Korean summit.

That paved the way for a whirl of diplomacy, including three inter-Korean summits in six months and a landmark June 12 Singapore meeting between United States President Donald Trump and the North Korean leader.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

Sunday's Hong Kong (Sha Tin) form analysis

EXULTANT HAT-TRICK IN STORE

RACE 1 (2,000M)

8 Happy Rocky has been racing consistently. The outside gate is generally a negative over the 2,000m, but he'll be getting back in the field anyway. Under champion jockey Zac Purton, he can come home over the top.

7 Garlic Yeah was just edged out by Clement Legend last time out. He meets Clement Legend three pounds (1.36kg) better for a head defeat, so he is capable.

3 Clement Legend, on the other hand, has won his last four races. While it is so rare for horses to win five on end in handicaps in Hong Kong, he can't be discarded.

10 Le Panache is next best.

RACE 2 (1,000M)

5 King's Trooper sat down in the gates for his debut last month and became cast, leading to his withdrawal. He has trialled well since and the extra three weeks might actually prove a positive.

12 Happy Cooperation ran second at Happy Valley last time out. If he can get across to a position near the speed, he can stick on well.

7 Takingfurther looks the type who can progress rapidly. Expect a bold performance on debut.

13 Bullish Brother ran well last time out and is drawn to advantage.

RACE 3 (1,400M)

8 Enjoy Life got a long way out of his ground in a race dominated on the speed by Care Free Prince last start. If he gets a race run to his liking, he's capable of a better show.

3 Sam's Love was the only horse to make significant ground in that Care Free Prince race. He should be flying home again.

4 High Rev has run well in two of his three starts. He has to overcome a wide draw but can perform strongly in this spot.

11 Vital Spring can return to form with even luck.

RACE 4 (1,200M)

11 Aerohappiness has all the talent in the world, but he's still doing a few little things wrong that are halting his progression. Second-up, he should be primed to get into the finish.

12 Master Albert doesn't win out of turn. Gate 14 should require him to be ridden quietly. If Derek Leung can remain patient aboard him, he's capable of flying home.

5 Hard Promise is racing well and can finish around the mark again.

1 Key Witness dead-heated with Prance Dragon at the Chinese New Year Raceday. The old boy can finish around the mark again.

RACE 5 (1,400M)

3 Waikuku has emerged as a Hong Kong Derby contender with his last two wins over 1,400m. He's racing over 1,400m again, following a similar path to his stablemate and last year's Derby winner Ping Hai Star. He can win again on his road to bigger and better races.

1 Good Standing finally broke through for the first time in Hong Kong last time out. He returns to 1,400m, but now that the monkey is off his back, perhaps he can go on with it.

4 Star Shine has had only one rider throughout his Hong Kong career, but with that jockey – Douglas Whyte – now retired, Vincent Ho takes over. Second-up, he can get into the finish.

8 King Opie is a player once more.

RACE 6 (1,400M)
QUEEN'S SILVER JUBILEE CUP

1 Beauty Generation won this race last year, getting the better of Beat The Clock by a head. He's clearly gone to another level this season, winning his last three races – the Group 2 Jockey Club Mile, and the Group 1 Hong Kong Mile and the Group 1 Stewards' Cup – by three lengths on each occasion. He re-



Exultant (left) winning the Group 3 Centenary Vase over 1,800m last time out. A run previous, he triumphed in the Group 1 Hong Kong Vase over 2,400m. PHOTO: HKJC

turns to 1,400m, but it is difficult to see him being beaten.

2 Beat The Clock finally scored a first Group 1 win last time out in the Centenary Sprint Cup. He's honest and the rematch with Beauty Generation from last year is a tantalising prospect.

10 Rattan is unsuited at the weights, but he's made a name for himself as a fresh 1,400m performer. He can get into the placings with even luck.

5 Conte is the new kid on the block, to an extent. Ryan Moore takes his first ride on the five-year-old and if he gets a good start, he's likely to be around the mark.

RACE 7 (2,000M)
CITI HONG KONG GOLD CUP

1 Exultant may have been suited by a pace meltdown last time out, but he still had to carry plenty of weight to sweep to victory in the Group 3 Centenary Vase over 1,800m. That followed his win in the Group 1 Hong Kong Vase over 2,400m in December and he can take another step forward with a win.

4 Glorious Forever was unsuited last time out and that effort should be forgiven. If he can get out on the speed without too much pressure from Time Warp, just like what happened in the Group 1 Hong Kong Cup over 2,000m two runs back, he's capable of redeeming himself.

2 Pakistan Star gets Tommy Berry aboard for just the second time. He took the Group 1 Champions & Chater Cup over 2,400m with Berry in the saddle last May and this could be a masterstroke.

10 Simply Brilliant is still on an upward spiral and can't be completely dismissed.

RACE 8 (1,400M)

14 Happy Force has drawn wide in his last four starts at the course and distance, winning twice and finishing third and fourth on the other two occasions. He now gets the inside gate and, if Keith Yeung can bounce him out quickly, he should lead with ease. In that role, he can prove tough to run down.

5 Noble Steed has to overcome a wide draw but he'll be running on

late, as has become his shtick.

4 Comfort Life has been mixing his form of late. Hugh Bowman may prove a positive booking and he can stick on well if the Australian rider can get him into the right position.

11 Mighty Maverick is another drawn awkwardly but is a place hope.

RACE 9 (1,800M)

3 Red Warrior is a fascinating contender, making his Sha Tin debut at his eighth Hong Kong start. The former English galloper never wins by much, but he's extremely honest and he has been brought along steadily by trainer John Size. Circuit Glory and Litterateur franked his form at Happy Valley on Wednesday night and, as a left-field player, he's worth a play.

1 Dark Dream caught the eye, flying home for fourth in the Hong Kong Classic Mile, stamping himself as the nominal favourite for the Hong Kong Derby. He can continue his progression towards that race with a big run.

2 Furore scored a first Hong Kong

win in the Hong Kong Classic Mile. He has to overcome a wide gate, but should only relish the extra 200m.

10 Ho Ho Khan has won his last three starts over this course and distance. He can't be dismissed.

RACE 10 (1,400M)

3 Ka Ying Legend gets blinkers for the first time. He brings some of the best form in this race with decent efforts behind promising horses Styling City, Regency Legend, Waikuku and Music Addition – all subsequent winners – and he deserves plenty of respect with Bowman jumping aboard again.

6 Racing Fighter is drawn wide in gate 12 but is racing so well that he can't be ignored.

9 Alcaei needs things to go his way off his current rating but he's drawn to take advantage.

10 Picken has won three of his last four starts. He's likely to have plenty of admirers again and likely to be under the odds.

• Comments courtesy of The Hong Kong Jockey Club

SUNDAY'S HONG KONG (SHA TIN) RACE CARD

RACE 1
TIME: 1:00

CLASS 4 TURF - 2000M Stakes: HK\$920,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	BRING IT ON	CH YIP	C WONG
2	AMAZING AGILITY	HN WONG	130 1
3	CLEMENT LEGEND	C S SHUM	K TEE TAN
4	CHATER THUNDER	D FERRARIS	ABADEL
5	FULL OF CHANCES	TP YUNG	G VAN NIEKERK
6	ISHVARA	TP YUNG	M L YEUNG
7	GARLIC YEAH	CH YIP	J MOORE
8	HAPPY ROCK	C W CHANG	Z PURTON
9	SWOT WINDICATOR	D J HALL	C Y HO
10	LE PANACHE	W Y SO	S DE SOUSA

RACE 2
TIME: 1:30

CLASS 4 TURF - 1000M Stakes: HK\$920,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	MY CHANCE	K W LUI	URISPOLI
2	WINNER SUPREME	Y S TSUI	A S ANNA
3	ARRIBA ARRIBA	W Y SO	K C LEUNG
4	CAPTAIN FANTASTIC	AT MILLARD	S DE SOUSA
5	KING'S TROOPER	TP YUNG	C WONG
6	SHINING ACE	JSIZE	J MOORE
7	TAKINGFURTHER	K H TING	HN WONG
8	TRUST ME	CH YIP	W M LUI
9	WONDER EXPRESS	C S SHUM	K TEE TAN
10	LET'S COME BACK	C FOWNES	M CHADWICK
11	SUNSHINE UNIVERSE	R GIBSON	C WONG
12	HAPPY COOPERATION	TP YUNG	M L YEUNG
13	BULLISH BROTHER	AS CRUZ	C Y HO
14	LEVANTE	L HO	M F POON

RACE 3
TIME: 2:00

CLASS 4 TURF - 1400M Stakes: HK\$920,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	GREEN CARD	J MOORE	T BERRY
2	DELIGHT EXPRESS	AT MILLARD	C Y HO
3	SAM'S LOVE	CH YIP	Z PURTON
4	HIGH REV	D J HALL	C SCHOFIELD
5	MONEYMORE	W Y SO	M HARLEY

CLASS 4 TURF - 2000M Stakes: HK\$920,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
6	GOLDEN FOUR	COMPASSION STAR	ENJOY LIFE
7	TRIUMPHANT LORD	ROYAL RACER	WITALL SPRING
8	LOVE CHUNGHWA	K H TING	TP YUNG
9	FINE WITH ME	L HO	HN WONG
10	POSITIVELY HIGH	M F POON	116 12

RACE 4
TIME: 2:30

CLASS 4 TURF - 1200M Stakes: HK\$1,380,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	KEY WITNESS	AS CRUZ	M F POON
2	WINSTON'S LAD	K W LUI	C WONG
3	MANNA FROM HEAVEN	P F YIU	HN WONG
4	THE ABRAKAS	Y S TSUI	M L YEUNG
5	HARD PROMISE	TP YUNG	S DE SOUSA
6	LUCKY HERO	C S SHUM	Z PURTON
7	DALRIADAN	CH YIP	URISPOLI
8	AMAZING CHOCOLATE	R GIBSON	G VAN NIEKERK
9	VILLA FIONN	K H TING	K TEE TAN
10	FIRST RESPONDER	J MOORE	D OLIVER
11	AEROHAPPINESS	JSIZE	J MOORE
12	MASTER ALBERT	N CALLAN	C Y HO
13	GOD OF DRAGON	D FERRARIS	M CHADWICK
14	ULTIMATE GLORY	K L MAN	HN WONG

RACE 5
TIME: 3:00

CLASS 4 TURF - 1400M Stakes: HK\$1,950,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	GOOD STANDING	J MOORE	Z PURTON
2	DRAGON GENERAL	Y S TSUI	C SCHOFIELD
3	WAIKUKU	JSIZE	J MOORE
4	STAR SHINE	C Y HO	129 7
5	GOLD WIN	AS CRUZ	K TEE TAN
6	SICHUAN DAR	AT MILLARD	ABADEL
7	JADE FORTUNE	K L MAN	URISPOLI
8	KING OPIE	F C LOR	G VAN NIEKERK
9	MY DARLING	TP YUNG	M L YEUNG
10	KINGS SHIELD	F C LOR	K C LEUNG
11	PRECIOUSSHIP	P F YIU	M CHADWICK

CLASS 2 TURF - 1400M Stakes: HK\$1,950,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	GOOD STANDING	J MOORE	Z PURTON
2	DRAGON GENERAL	Y S TSUI	C SCHOFIELD
3	WAIKUKU	JSIZE	J MOORE
4	STAR SHINE	C Y HO	129 7
5	GOLD WIN	AS CRUZ	K TEE TAN
6	SICHUAN DAR	AT MILLARD	ABADEL
7	JADE FORTUNE	K L MAN	URISPOLI
8	KING OPIE	F C LOR	G VAN NIEKERK
9	MY DARLING	TP YUNG	M L YEUNG
10	KINGS SHIELD	F C LOR	K C LEUNG
11	PRECIOUSSHIP	P F YIU	M CHADWICK

RACE 6
TIME: 3:30

CLASS 2 TURF - 1400M Stakes: HK\$1,950,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	BEAUTY GENERATION	J MOORE	Z PURTON
2	BEAT THE CLOCK	JSIZE	J MOORE
3	SEASONS BLOOM	C S SHUM	A S ANNA
4	BEAUTY ONLY	AS CRUZ	N CALLAN
5	CONTE	JSIZE	R MOORE
6	FIFTY FIFTY	L HO	K TEE TAN
7	LITTLE GEM	C Y HO	S DE SOUSA
8	WINNER'S WAY	AS CRUZ	S DE SOUSA
9	PINGWU SPARK	TP YUNG	H BOWMAN
10	RATTAN	R GIBSON	C SCHOFIELD

RACE 7
TIME: 4:05

CLASS 2 TURF - 2000M Stakes: HK\$10,000,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	EXULTANT	AS CRUZ	Z PURTON
2	PAKISTAN STAR	AS CRUZ	T BERRY
3	TIME WARP	AS CRUZ	C Y HO
4	GLORIOUS FOREVER	F C LOR	S DE SOUSA
5	NOBLE STEED	C FOWNES	N CALLAN
6	EAGLE WAY	J MOORE	H BOWMAN
7	SINGAPORE SLING	AT MILLARD	G VAN NIEKERK
8	GOLD MOUNT	R GIBSON	R MOORE
9	NORTHERN SUPERSTAR	AT MILLARD	ABADEL
10	SIMPLY BRILLIANT	F C LOR	J MOORE
11	DINOZZO	JSIZE	J MOORE

RACE 8
TIME: 4:40

CLASS 3 TURF - 1400M Stakes: HK\$1,380,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	BEAUTY SPIRIT	AS CRUZ	K TEE TAN
2	DRAGON COMMANDER	D FERRARIS	G VAN NIEKERK
3	CAMERA FACE	Y S TSUI	M HARLEY
4	COMFORT LIFE	F C LOR	H BOWMAN
5	NOBLE STEED	K W LUI	S DE SOUSA
6	FLYING MURTY	P F YIU	C SCHOFIELD
7	HAPPY WIN WIN	CH YIP	URISPOLI
8	SUPER LEGANCE	K H TING	ABADEL

CLASS 3 TURF - 1400M Stakes: HK\$1,380,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
9	CASIMIRO	BELOCH	57.0
10	EARTH TRILOGY	CH YIP	57.0
11	MIGHTY MAVERICK	C FOWNES	57.0
12	STARSHIP	P O'SULLIVAN	57.0
13	SMART CHARADE	W Y SO	57.0
14	HAPPY FORCE	TP YUNG	57.0

RACE 9
TIME: 5:15

CLASS 4YO TURF - 1800M Stakes: HK\$10,000,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	DARK DREAM	F C LOR	Z PURTON
2	FURORE	F C LOR	H BOWMAN
3	RED WARRIOR	JSIZE	J MOORE
4	KAYING STAR	AS CRUZ	C Y HO
5	MISSION TCOON	F C LOR	K C LEUNG
6	EASY GO EASY WIN	J MOORE	T BERRY
7	HARMONY VICTORY	C S SHUM	ABADEL
8	MIS AND SO	JSIZE	R MOORE
9	SOLAR PATCH	J MOORE	D OLIVER
10	HO HO KHAN	D J HALL	S DE SOUSA
11	GOLD GUEST	R GIBSON	M CHADWICK
12	HELENE LEADINGSTAR	AS CRUZ	K TEE TAN
13	SUNNY SPEED	J MOORE	URISPOLI
14	GREEN LUCK	C FOWNES	C SCHOFIELD

RACE 10
TIME: 5:50

CLASS 3 TURF - 1400M Stakes: HK\$1,380,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	FLYING THUNDER	F C LOR	K TEE TAN
2	MONSTER KAKA	D J HALL	M F POON
3	KAYING LEGEND	TP YUNG	H BOWMAN
4	KINGSFIELD	R GIBSON	C WONG
5	F C LOR	TP YUNG	C WONG
6	RACING FIGHTER	CH YIP	Z PURTON
7	SMART LEADER	AS CRUZ	S DE SOUSA
8	GOOD BEAUTY	J MOORE	D OLIVER
9	ALCAEI	P F YIU	C Y HO
10	PICKEN	JSIZE	J MOORE
11	GRAND ONE	P O'SULLIVAN	M CHADWICK
12	DEFINING MOMENT	C FOWNES	M MURPHY
13	RELENTLESS ME	W Y SO	K C LEUNG
14	STARLIT KNIGHT	Y S TSUI	M L YEUNG

RACE 11
TIME: 6:30

CLASS 4YO TURF - 1800M Stakes: HK\$10,000,000			
No.	Horse Name	Trainer	Jockey
1	DARK DREAM	F C LOR	Z PURTON
2	FURORE	F C LOR	H BOWMAN
3	RED WARRIOR	JSIZE	J MOORE
4	KAYING STAR	AS CRUZ	C Y HO
5	MISSION TCOON	F C LOR	K C LEUNG
6	EASY GO EASY WIN	J MOORE	T BERRY
7	HARMONY VICTORY	C S SHUM	ABADEL
8	MIS AND SO	JSIZE	R MOORE
9	SOLAR PATCH	J MOORE	D OLIVER
10	HO HO KHAN	D J HALL	S DE SOUSA
11	GOLD GUEST	R GIBSON	M CHADWICK
12	HELENE LEADINGSTAR	AS CRUZ	K TEE TAN
13	SUNNY SPEED	J MOORE	URISPOLI
14	GREEN LUCK	C FOWNES	C SCHOFIELD

16-02-19 SATURDAY - AUSTRALIA RACE CARD

AUSTRALIA FEED: RANDWICK/ FLEMINGTON/ ASCOT/ TOOWOOMBA (#OTH2)

Race 1 12:15PM (AS180,000)			
1	x433 Dethroli	59.0	[1] J Parr
2	621x2 Dreamforce	59.0	[4] H Bowman
3	x2x4 Kaempick	59.0	[2] Clark
4	805x1 Lancet	59.0	[10] M R King
5	117x2 Noire	55.5	[1] K Mcveoy
6	395x5 Eckstein	54.0	[7] Clipperton
7	461x1 Don't Give A Da	53.0	–
8	45x5x Alburnin	53.0	[2] J Ford
9	111x1 Brutal	53.0	[10] B Avdulla
10	30x2 In Good Time	53.0	[9] A Adkins

Race 2 12:30PM (AS125,000)			
1	000x1 Sin To Win	60.5	[12] Kersley
2	x721 Heptagon	58.0	[13] M Zahra
3	890x1 Guardian	57.5	[10] J Allen
4	513x2 Guilot	57.5	[11] Dunn
5	99x3 Our Peckly Blind	57.0	[8] L Meech
6	x803 George Patton	56.0	[14] L Currie
7	132x4 Gold Fields	56.0	[15] Spain
8	214x5 Mr Money Bags	56.0	[1] M Neil
9	14x7 Valac	56.0	[16] L King
10	x111 Antiah	55.0	[7] J Maskell
11	1201 Critical Thinking	55.0	[17] D Oliver
12	150x1 Serenade The	55.0	[3] B Allen
13	46x9 Thunder Cloud	54.0	[18] C Williams
14	74x83 Subotage	54.0	[15] J Kah
15	x714 Groundbreak	54.0	[2] T Barry
16	2311 Macloirey	54.0	[9] D Lane

Race 3 01:10PM (AS160,000)			
1	x75x Happy Clapper	59.0	[1] Clipperton
2	641x Patrick Erin	59.0	[4] Weatherly
3	222x Birmham Rock	59.0	[3] J Ford
4	08x1 Tom Melbourne	57.5	[10] M Walker
5	111x1 Winx	57.0	[8] H Bowman
6	138x1 Unforgotten	57.0	[9



My Dreamliner giving apprentice jockey Iskandar Rosman an armchair ride in Race 3 at Kranji last night. It was a two-from-two feat by the KY Young-trained three-year-old. ST PHOTO: DAVE LIM

Friday's South Africa results

RACE 1

1st 1 Press Release (\$17-\$8)
2nd 2 Alphabet Street (\$38)
3rd 7 Princess Blitz (\$19)
4th 11 Sport Chic **Forecast** \$156
Place Forecast (1-2) \$38, (1-7) \$14, (2-7) \$107 **Tierce** No winner (\$5,508 jackpot carried forward to next race) **Trio** \$743 **Quartet** No winner (\$2,298 carried forward)

RACE 2

1st 1 Amazon King (\$9-\$7)
2nd 4 Founding Father (\$18)
3rd 6 Counting Stars (\$11)
4th 5 Valentink **Forecast** \$43
Place Forecast (1-4) \$16, (1-6) \$8, (4-6) \$26 **Tierce** \$415 **Trio** \$102 **Quartet** \$1,516

RACE 3

1st 2 Eternal Night (\$16-\$7)
2nd 6 Neverletugo (\$9)
3rd 3 Silken Thread (\$7)
4th 7 Princess Elsa **Forecast** \$21
Place Forecast (2-6) \$8, (2-3) \$5, (3-6) \$6 **Tierce** \$82 **Trio** \$17 **Quartet** \$153
Scratching: 4 Kanishiwa

RACE 4

1st 7 Lets Play Ball (\$50-\$11)
2nd 6 Captain Parker (\$27)
3rd 8 Master Newton (\$28)
4th 4 Rock The Cot
Forecast \$280 **Place Forecast** (6-7) \$63, (7-8) \$50, (6-8) \$94
Tierce No winner (\$7,824 carried forward) **Trio** \$3,237 **Quartet** No winner (\$408 carried forward)

RACE 5

1st 1 Celestial Prince (\$10-\$6)
2nd 2 Master Design (\$18)
3rd 5 WingsoverthecLOUD (\$29)
4th 9 Hither Green **Forecast** \$36
Place Forecast (1-2) \$13, (1-5) \$26, (2-5) \$78 **Tierce** \$545 **Trio** \$208 **Quartet** No winner (\$904 carried forward)

RACE 6

1st 4 Raven Girl (\$58-\$17)
2nd 9 Studio Blues (\$8)
3rd 6 Damaraland (\$17)
4th 11 Smokey Affair
Forecast \$42 **Place Forecast** (4-9) \$17, (4-6) \$33, (6-9) \$20
Tierce \$332 **Trio** \$74 **Quartet** No winner (\$1,188 carried forward)
Scratching: 1 Maverick Girl

Results of Races 7 and 8 were not available at press time.
Log on to
www.singaporepools.com.sg
for the results.

MY DREAMLINER GOES UP, UP AND AWAY

Tang Weng Fei-owned smart debut winner follows up with an easier all-the-way victory

Tan Thean Loon

After finishing first past the winning post, apprentice jockey Iskandar Rosman stood on his stirrups and blew a kiss to the sky to celebrate his victory.

After all, he just had a dream ride on runaway winner My Dreamliner, who also happened to be his second winner last night, after My Gold two races earlier in the opening event. Before the night's proceedings, the young Malaysian

lad's best efforts this year were five seconds from 18 rides.

Owned by prominent oil trader and Singapore Athletics president Tang Weng Fei, My Dreamliner made a dream debut on Dec 2 with another rookie, CS Chin, astride in a Restricted Maiden event.

Despite jumping from barrier 11, the KY Young-trained three-year-old led all the way to score by 2½ lengths over the Polytrack 1,000m in 59.73sec.

Although he broke from another wide draw in gate 10 in last night's

Class 4 race over the same 1,000m sprint, My Dreamliner flew in beautifully to secure the shortest run home along the rails.

First-up beaten favourite Big Elephant, who was recently gelded, hounded the raging \$7 favourite. My Dreamliner was rock-solid in the betting from the first bell, showing \$10 but plunging to \$7 at the "off".

It was rightly so, as the bay Australian-bred gelding had improved by leaps and bounds and went into last night's race with a superb trial win. Furthermore, the horse was benefiting from Iskandar's 4kg rookie's allowance, which brought the handicapped weight down to a luxurious 51.5kg.

My Dreamliner flew over the first 400m at a decent 24.60sec and, by the time he straightened up, his rivals were practically gasping for air. My Dreamliner kicked to a two-length advantage.

From the 250m mark, the son of Dream Ahead and Fly To The Moon jettied away to make his opposition look second-rate.

At the post, the winning margin was a massive 5¾ lengths from \$157 outsider Time To Rock. Sun Princes, a \$175 shot, was third, a head away. My Dreamliner clocked 59.16sec, which was slightly faster than his debut's winning time.

The winner's annihilation of his rivals certainly got Tang dreaming of another Better Than Ever, his for-

mer champion galloper whom he raced with business partner Thomas Loke under Jupiter Stable.

"I hope he is the next Better Than Ever," said Tang, smiling broadly. "Once they straightened up, the game was over. I think he can go a little bit further, actually. He was strong on the line."

Young was equally impressed with My Dreamliner's profound follow-up victory from a 2½-month break but would let nature take its course for his young and exciting galloper.

"I don't like to rush new horses. I see some ability and I will take my time. One thing at a time, I'll give him a break," said Young, who started training only in July 2017 and failed to saddle a winner that year but did very well last season with 35 winners.

Iskandar, who is indentured to reigning champion trainer Lee Freedman, was thankful for the armchair ride on Young's sixth winner of this season.

"This horse very easy to ride and thanks to CS Chin, because he taught me how to ride him. This time, barrier 10, tried to go to the front and tried my best," he said.

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FRIDAY'S SINGAPORE (SHORT COURSE E/POLYTRACK) RESULTS

RACE 1

1 MY GOLD 58 c54 (24-9)
2 MAJULAH 56.5 c55.5 (392-79)
3 RICH FORTUNE 56.5 (63-21)
4 RUN THE DAY 58 (478-9)
5 HONOR 56.5 (46-15)
6 THE GOLDEN GOAT 58 c55 (110-29)
7 SO CALLED 56.5 c52.5 (154-41)
8 ALABRANCH 56.5 (59-14)
9 MAN OF WORDS 56.5 (101-27)
10 HIGH LIMIT 58 c54 (38-9)
11 GOLDEN SPARK 56.5 c55 (177-47)
12 EVIL ROADSTER 58 (24-8)

Winning stable: ST Resources. **Trainer:** ZL Mok. **Time:** 59.97sec (Going: good). **Forecast:** \$636. **Tierce:** \$3201. **Quartet:** No winner (\$13674 jackpot carried forward to next race). **P Forecast:** \$155 (1-12), \$180 (12-6), \$26 (1-6). **Trio:** \$1046. **Course scratchings:** 13 Fragrance Empire 14 Solitaire

RACE 2

1 TAX FREE 57 c53 (224-44)
2 QUI FLVER 57 (34-9)
3 EASY SOUTH EAST 57 c56 (68-9)
4 LIMP'S PASSION 57 c56 (217-29)
5 AXEL 57 (70-28)
6 CATCH THE TIGER 57 (85-25)
7 NATE'S HONOUR 57 (248-61)
8 MY BOSS 57 c53 (478-122)
9 FLAUNT 57 (13-10)
10 ATLANTIAN 57 (15-10)
11 STELLA POLARE 53.5 (624-157)
12 HOSTWING QUEEN 55.5 (39-21)

Winning stable: ARM. **Trainer:** J O'Hara. **Time:** 1min 6.30sec (good). **Forecast:** \$188. **Tierce:** \$3488 (3-8-F), \$5977 (13-9). **Quartet:** No winner (\$49764 carried forward). **P Forecast:** \$57 (13-3), \$13 (3-8), \$19 (13-5), \$25 (3-9), \$30 (8-9), \$52 (9-13). **Trio:** \$780 (3-8-13), \$567 (3-9-13). **Course scratchings:** 1 Galvarino 14 Clarton Supreme

RACE 3

1 MYDREAMLINER 55.5 c51.5 (7-5-10)
2 TIME TO ROCK 57 (57-40)
3 SUN PRINCEPS 57 (175-34)
4 SUPERONCISURPRISE 54.5 (93-27)
5 BOY NEXT DOOR 55.5 (78-15)
6 JUMPIN JACK 55.5 c52.5 (315-69)
7 DREAMWEAVER 55 (230-44)
8 SHAQRAA 57 c56 (185-44)
9 LIM'S FORCE 55.5 c54.5 (84-25)

Riskandar* (3) 5 4 1 (522) -
T See (8) 7 8 2 (548) 0.5
CC Wong* (9) 12 12 3 (553) 1
S Noh (10) 4 6 4 (474) Ns
B Thompson (6) 8 7 5 (461) Hd
T Krissna* (11) 4 5 6 (506) Ns
M Nizar* (10) 11 10 7 (503) Hd
I Zahar (5) 1 2 8 (450) 1.25
Isaifudin (7) 10 9 9 (465) Nk
ASyahir* (2) 6 6 10 (501) 0.5
TH Koh (12) 9 11 11 (500) 1
B Woodworth (1) 3 3 12 (562) Hd

ASyahir* (2) 4 3 1 (487) -
B Thompson (10) 3 2 2 (508) 0.5
S Noh (4) 6 4 3 (463) 1
T Rehaizat (1) 8 6 3 (497) Dht
V Duric (9) 12 8 5 (494) Hd
M Kellady (7) 11 9 6 (490) Nk
M Radd (8) 9 11 7 (459) 1.25
Riskandar* (11) 10 12 8 (457) Shd
J Powell (3) 2 1 9 (509) 0.5
B Woodworth (5) 5 5 10 (448) 0.75
M Lerner (6) 7 10 11 (441) 8.5
G Boss (12) 1 7 12 (441) 7.25

Riskandar* (10) 1 1 1 (513) -
B Woodworth (6) 5 6 2 (513) 5.75
V Duric (5) 9 8 3 (501) Hd
M Lerner (2) 6 3 4 (509) 0.5
CC Wong* (8) 7 9 5 (452) 1.25
T Krissna* (12) 4 4 6 (500) Ns
D Moor (7) 8 7 7 (499) Ns
S Noh (4) 12 11 8 (544) 1.25
T See (3) 10 10 9 (492) 0.5

1 PIONEER SEVEN 54.5 (72-23)
5 BIG ELEPHANT 56 (72-16)
4 QUANTUM 56.5 (53-19)

Winning owner: Tang Weng Fei. **Trainer:** KY Young. **Time:** 59.16sec (good). **Forecast:** \$32. **Tierce:** \$615. **Quartet:** \$7437. **P Forecast:** \$15 (10-3), \$67 (3-2), \$18 (10-2). **Trio:** \$237. **Course scratchings:** 13 Natural Impulse

RACE 4

2 SACRED CROIX 58 (18-6)
8 EVERYBODY HAPPY 58 c56 (68-20)
3 LARCEY 58 (380-73)
4 WILD BEE 58 c54 (33-11)
1 HEARTLIGHT 58 (26-12)
9 OUR SHOWCASE 58 (26-9)
6 LOOKS GOOD 58 c57 (71-20)
12 TURF BEAUTY 56.5 (76-18)
7 SABABA 58 (75-18)
5 SILENT ARROW 56.5 (212-40)

Winning stable: Raffles Racing. **Trainer:** M Walker. **Time:** 1min 10.94sec (good). **Forecast:** \$52. **Tierce:** \$3021. **Quartet:** \$8132. **P Forecast:** \$19 (2-8), \$309 (8-3), \$72 (2-3). **Trio:** \$576. **Course scratchings:** 5 Cerdan 13 Auspicious Ace 14 Golden Coin

RACE 5

5 DESTROYER ECLIPSE 56.5 (209-39)
2 CHALAZA 59.5 c58.5 (38-8)
4 CIRCUIT MISSION 56.5 (7-5-10)
10 OUR PINNACLE 55 (77-16)
1 FLAK JACKET 59.5 c56.5 (142-27)
6 SPORTSCASTER 55 (394-50)
7 VIOLA D'ATERRA 55 (131-23)
11 SATELLITE WARRIOR 55 (81-16)
9 OTTAWA 55 (172-28)
3 GOLD STIRKE 56.5 (32-12)
6 JUSTICE LIGHT 55 (117-25)
8 YUSTICE LION 55 c51 (317-55)

Winning stable: Eclipse. **Trainer:** J Peters. **Time:** 1min 22.38sec (good). **Forecast:** \$393. **Tierce:** \$4335. **Quartet:** \$16317. **P Forecast:** \$64 (5-2), \$5 (2-4), \$24 (5-4). **Trio:** \$103. **Course scratchings:** 13 Shahbaa 14 Scorpion

RACE 6

7 WONDERFUL PAINT 56.5 c56 (18-5-10)
6 MR DUJARDIN 56.5 (14-6)

JP Van Der Merwe (5) 3 5 10 (520) Hd
KA'Issuhairi (11) 2 2 11 (469) 0.75
G Boss (1) 11 12 12 (501) 1.5

Winning owner: Tang Weng Fei. **Trainer:** KY Young. **Time:** 59.16sec (good). **Forecast:** \$32. **Tierce:** \$615. **Quartet:** \$7437. **P Forecast:** \$15 (10-3), \$67 (3-2), \$18 (10-2). **Trio:** \$237. **Course scratchings:** 13 Natural Impulse

RACE 7

2 SACRED CROIX 58 (18-6)
8 EVERYBODY HAPPY 58 c56 (68-20)
3 LARCEY 58 (380-73)
4 WILD BEE 58 c54 (33-11)
1 HEARTLIGHT 58 (26-12)
9 OUR SHOWCASE 58 (26-9)
6 LOOKS GOOD 58 c57 (71-20)
12 TURF BEAUTY 56.5 (76-18)
7 SABABA 58 (75-18)
5 SILENT ARROW 56.5 (212-40)

Winning stable: Raffles Racing. **Trainer:** M Walker. **Time:** 1min 10.94sec (good). **Forecast:** \$52. **Tierce:** \$3021. **Quartet:** \$8132. **P Forecast:** \$19 (2-8), \$309 (8-3), \$72 (2-3). **Trio:** \$576. **Course scratchings:** 5 Cerdan 13 Auspicious Ace 14 Golden Coin

RACE 8

5 DESTROYER ECLIPSE 56.5 (209-39)
2 CHALAZA 59.5 c58.5 (38-8)
4 CIRCUIT MISSION 56.5 (7-5-10)
10 OUR PINNACLE 55 (77-16)
1 FLAK JACKET 59.5 c56.5 (142-27)
6 SPORTSCASTER 55 (394-50)
7 VIOLA D'ATERRA 55 (131-23)
11 SATELLITE WARRIOR 55 (81-16)
9 OTTAWA 55 (172-28)
3 GOLD STIRKE 56.5 (32-12)
6 JUSTICE LIGHT 55 (117-25)
8 YUSTICE LION 55 c51 (317-55)

Winning stable: Eclipse. **Trainer:** J Peters. **Time:** 1min 22.38sec (good). **Forecast:** \$393. **Tierce:** \$4335. **Quartet:** \$16317. **P Forecast:** \$64 (5-2), \$5 (2-4), \$24 (5-4). **Trio:** \$103. **Course scratchings:** 13 Shahbaa 14 Scorpion

RACE 9

7 WONDERFUL PAINT 56.5 c56 (18-5-10)
6 MR DUJARDIN 56.5 (14-6)

12 MAJESTIC EMPRESS 53.5 (41-13)
1 MIGHTY KENNY 59.5 c56.5 (139-33)
4 SOLO SUN 56.5 (35-12)
5 MIDDLE KINGDOM 55 (77-18)
10 PANACHE 55 c53 (217-35)
2 GOLAZO 58 (40-19)
3 MIGHTY EMPEROR 56.5 (134-33)
11 PARTY MAKER 55 c51 (412-81)
8 HIGHER SOUL 55 (157-59)
5 VALUE OF JUSTICE 56.5 (157-40)

Winning stable: Paint. **Trainer:** Leslie Khoo. **Time:** 2min 4.55sec (good). **Forecast:** \$10. **Tierce:** \$106. **Quartet:** \$3373. **P Forecast:** \$6 (7-6), \$9 (6-12), \$16 (7-12). **Trio:** \$27.

RACE 10

5 BOY WONDER 58 (49-14)
13 LORD OF CLOUD 58 (23-7)
1 DICTON 59.5 (23-12)
7 SAFER 58 (38-13)
3 GUILTY PLEASURES 59.5 c56.5 (125-25)
10 PUSANA 55 c52 (103-27)
4 LITTLE BIG MAN 59.5 c58.5 (27-12)
11 YULONG HONOR 55 c54 (341-75)
12 CARNELIAN 55 (186-50)
2 LIMS ROYAL 59.5 c55.5 (78-25)
9 GOLD REWARD 56.5 (164-39)
8 WECANDO 56.5 (28-7)

Winning stable: Loti-A. **Trainer:** J Saimee. **Time:** 1min 22.72sec (good). **Forecast:** \$69. **Tierce:** \$1172. **Quartet:** \$2341. **P Forecast:** \$22 (5-13), \$9 (13-1), \$19 (5-1). **Trio:** \$85. **Course scratchings:** 6 Moritz Eclipse 14 Black Jade

RACE 11

5 THE ODDS 55.5 c54.5 (49-15)
8 QUADCOPTER 55 (23-13)
10 CROUCHING SUN 54.5 (52-16)
3 SMOOTH OPERATOR 56.5 (118-37)
1 GAIN ECLIPSE 57 c56 (11-5-10)
6 ZMAN 55.5 (84-25)
2 BORN TO BE KING 56.5 (76-20)
12 PARADOR 54.5 (182-57)
9 RED CLAW 55 (257-69)
11 HOWL 54.5 c50.5 (49-6)
13 ARES 62.5 (237-54)
7 HERO STAR 55 (65-17)

Winning stable: Great Mates. **Trainer:** J Peters. **Time:** 1min 10.71sec (good). **Forecast:** \$52. **Tierce:** \$784. **Quartet:** \$7440. **P Forecast:** \$17 (5-8), \$18 (8-10), \$30 (5-10). **Trio:** \$112. **Course scratchings:** 4 Elite Conquest 14 Spirit Seven

RACE 12

7 WONDERFUL PAINT 56.5 c56 (18-5-10)
6 MR DUJARDIN 56.5 (14-6)

JP Van Der Merwe (5) 3 7 3 (478) Nk
T Krissna* (9) 5 6 4 (477) 1.25
V Duric (8) 4 5 5 (464) 1
D Moor (7) 8 8 6 (447) 0.5
Riskandar* (11) 1 1 7 (532) Hd
M Lerner (12) 2 2 8 (485) 0.75
B Thompson (2) 11 12 9 (489) 1.5
ASyahir* (3) 10 10 10 (490) 0.5
CC Wong* (10) 6 3 11 (450) 1
G Boss (1) 7 9 12 (516) Nk

Winning owner: Tang Weng Fei. **Trainer:** KY Young. **Time:** 59.16sec (good). **Forecast:** \$32. **Tierce:** \$615. **Quartet:** \$7437. **P Forecast:** \$15 (10-3), \$67 (3-2), \$18 (10-2). **Trio:** \$237. **Course scratchings:** 13 Natural Impulse

RACE 13

2 SACRED CROIX 58 (18-6)
8 EVERYBODY HAPPY 58 c56 (68-20)
3 LARCEY 58 (380-73)
4 WILD BEE 58 c54 (33-11)
1 HEARTLIGHT 58 (26-12)
9 OUR SHOWCASE 58 (26-9)
6 LOOKS GOOD 58 c57 (71-20)
12 TURF BEAUTY 56.5 (76-18)
7 SABABA 58 (75-18)
5 SILENT ARROW 56.5 (212-40)

Winning stable: Raffles Racing. **Trainer:** M Walker. **Time:** 1min 10.94sec (good). **Forecast:** \$52. **Tierce:** \$3021. **Quartet:** \$8132. **P Forecast:** \$19 (2-8), \$309 (8-3), \$72 (2-3). **Trio:** \$576. **Course scratchings:** 5 Cerdan 13 Auspicious Ace 14 Golden Coin

RACE 14

5 DESTROYER ECLIPSE 56.5 (209-39)
2 CHALAZA 59.5 c58.5 (38-8)
4 CIRCUIT MISSION 56.5 (7-5-10)
10 OUR PINNACLE 55 (77-16)
1 FLAK JACKET 59.5 c56.5 (142-27)
6 SPORTSCASTER 55 (394-50)
7 VIOLA D'ATERRA 55 (131-23)
11 SATELLITE WARRIOR 55 (81-16)
9 OTTAWA 55 (172-28)
3 GOLD STIRKE 56.5 (32-12)
6 JUSTICE LIGHT 55 (117-25)
8 YUSTICE LION 55 c51 (317-55)

Winning stable: Eclipse. **Trainer:** J Peters. **Time:** 1min 22.38sec (good). **Forecast:** \$393. **Tierce:** \$4335. **Quartet:** \$16317. **P Forecast:** \$64 (5-2), \$5 (2-4), \$24 (5-4). **Trio:** \$103. **Course scratchings:** 13 Shahbaa 14 Scorpion

RACE 15

7 WONDERFUL PAINT 56.5 c56 (18-5-10)
6 MR DUJARDIN 56.5 (14-6)

12 MAJESTIC EMPRESS 53.5 (41-13)
1 MIGHTY KENNY 59.5 c56.5 (139-33)
4 SOLO SUN 56.5 (35-12)
5 MIDDLE KINGDOM 55 (77-18)
10 PANACHE 55 c53 (217-35)
2 GOLAZO 58 (40-19)
3 MIGHTY EMPEROR 56.5 (134-33)
11 PARTY MAKER 55 c51 (412-81)
8 HIGHER SOUL 55 (157-59)
5 VALUE OF JUSTICE 56.5 (157-40)

Winning stable: Paint. **Trainer:** Leslie Khoo. **Time:** 2min 4.55sec (good). **Forecast:** \$10. **Tierce:** \$106. **Quartet:** \$3373. **P Forecast:** \$6 (7-6), \$9 (6-12), \$16 (7-1

SPORT

Next 48 Hours

TODAY

BASKETBALL

ABL Formosa Dreamers v Saigon Heat (3pm), CLS Knights Indonesia v Mono Vampire (8pm) – StarHub Ch202.

FOOTBALL

English FA Cup 5th rd: Brighton v Derby (8.20pm), Wimbledon v Millwall (10.50pm), Newport v Man City (tomorrow, 1.20am) – Singtel TV Ch111.

Spanish LaLiga Celta v Levante (7.55pm), Rayo v Atletico (11.10pm), Sociedad v Leganes (tomorrow, 1.25am), Barcelona v Valladolid (tomorrow, 3.40am) – StarHub Ch213.

GOLF

LPGA Tour Women's Australian Open Day 3 (Singtel TV Ch115 & StarHub Ch209, 10am).

European Tour World Super 6 Perth Day 3 (StarHub Ch204, 1pm).

NETBALL

Super League Opening ceremony (1pm), Dolphins v Stingrays (2pm), Marlins v Barracudas (4pm), Narwhals v Mannas (6pm) – Our Tampines Hub (Team Sports Hall, Level 2).

TENNIS

ATP Rotterdam Open Day 6, s-finals (StarHub Ch201, 10pm & tomorrow, 2.30am).

TOMORROW

BASKETBALL

ABL Formosa Dreamers v Malaysia Dragons (3pm), Alab Pilipinas v Zhuhai Wolf Warriors (8pm) – StarHub Ch202.

FOOTBALL

English FA Cup 5th rd: Doncaster v Palace (Singtel TV Ch111), Swansea v Brentford (Ch112) – 11.55pm.

Spanish LaLiga Real v Girona (6.55pm), Valencia v Espanyol (11.10pm), Villarreal v Sevilla (Monday, 1.25am) – StarHub Ch213.

GOLF

LPGA Tour Women's Australian Open Day 4 (Singtel TV Ch115 & StarHub Ch209, 10am).

European Tour World Super 6 Perth Day 4 (StarHub Ch204, 11am).

TENNIS

ATP Rotterdam Open Day 7, final (StarHub Ch201, 10.30pm).



Ferrari's new SF90 car, launched at their Maranello base yesterday, pays tribute to the founding of the Italian carmaker 90 years ago by Enzo Ferrari. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

FERRARI EYE TITLE FIGHT

With their new car, last season's runners-up hope to pose better challenge to Mercedes

MILAN • Despite enjoying their best year since 2008 by winning six grands prix last season, Ferrari ultimately failed to land the one prize they crave the most – the Formula One Championship.

The Prancing Horse were runners-up to Mercedes, as was Sebastian Vettel to Lewis Hamilton.

While Ferrari chief executive officer Louis Camilleri conceded “such a setback is never easy to swallow”, Vettel believes they can end their

11-year title drought this season as “the team are on the right path”.

Speaking at yesterday's launch of their new SF90 car, which pays tribute to the founding of the Italian carmaker 90 years ago by Enzo Ferrari, at its Maranello base, Vettel said: “We're all excited. You start to see the car, little bits of it at the end of last year and then you see it come together, but today is the first time you see it.

“Unfortunately, I'm not dressed

properly, and can't just jump in and drive off. Hopefully, we can continue to improve.”

New teammate Charles Leclerc, who has replaced Finn Kimi Raikkonen as Vettel's driving partner, was equally enthused to “start this new adventure”.

The Monegasque said: “It's an emotional day and a very proud day for me. It's an opportunity to learn from Sebastian. I am pretty sure it will be an amazing season, but I am sure we'll make it.”

Camilleri also claimed an “exciting chapter in our history” was about to begin under new team principal Mattia Binotto, who replaced

Maurizio Arrivabene last month.

Camilleri told reporters: “Last season was our best one in the last 10 years, yet we fell short of our objectives.

“But we look ahead with strong commitment and determination.

“Mattia has been with Ferrari for about a quarter of a century... (and) his stellar career over that period is clear testament to his exceptional abilities and leadership skills.

“He knows the Scuderia inside out, he's very much a team player, decisive, talented and determined to make a huge difference at all levels.

“I have every confidence he will

lead the Scuderia to ever greater heights.”

He admitted that Ferrari owed it to their fans to put up a better challenge to Mercedes, who have swept the last five world titles.

The 63-year-old said: “As a team, we carry the hopes, expectations and pride of an entire nation and millions of fans from around the world.

“We accept this responsibility.”

Pre-season testing will start in Barcelona on Monday, with Binotto adding that while the SF90 was “a development of last year's car, (and) not a revolution”, Ferrari “have tried to push the bar”. DPA

Obituaries

FOR BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRIES, call 1800-289-9988 or 6319-5192

OM NAMA SHIVAYA



KURUNATHAN
Age: 62
Passed away peacefully on 14 February 2019
Dearly missed by loved ones.
Beloved Wife: Thanalethimi D/O VS Maniam
Father: M Kannusamy, deceased
Sons: Kartik Kurunathan & Thinesh Kurunathan
Brothers: K Ramachandaran, deceased
K Sathasivam
M K Lingam
K Muthu
S Balasubramaniam (Selvam)
K Balakrishnan
K Panjacharam
K Tamil Chelvan
Sisters: Chugela
Letchimani
Padmavathy, deceased
VS Maniam Family ; All Relatives & Friends
Beloved Husband, loving Father & dearest Brother
is resting peacefully at
BLK 454 FAJAR RD (Void Deck) S 670454
HP: 9185 2251
Cortege will leave the residence on Saturday, 16 February 2019
at 5pm for cremation at Mandai Crematorium, Hall 1 at 6.30pm.



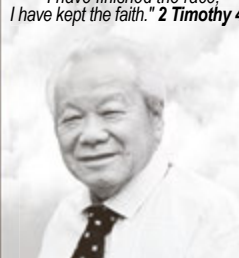
LIM TING MOI
Age: 59
passed away peacefully on 14 February 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered
by loved ones.
Husband:
Poon Choong Hong
Sons:
Poon Pei Wen
Poon Pei Jie
And all relatives and friends.
Wake is held at
Blk 446 Bright Hill Drive, Singapore 570446.
Cortege will leave on Monday, 18 February 2019
at 11am for Kong Meng San Phor Kark See
Crematorium for cremation at 12 noon.

With Deepest Sympathy & Heartfelt
Condolences to the Family of the Late



SSGT SALINAH BINTE MOHAMED
Departed on 14 February 2019
From
The Commissioner
& Staff of the
Singapore Police Force

*"I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7*



Richard Chang Yoke Hong
Age: 83
Entered God's rest
on 13 February 2019.
Loved by:
Wife: Susie Lam
Sons & Daughter-in-law:
Paul Chang
Roy Chang & Chew Ailin
Grandchildren:
Chang Yi Kai, Chang Yi Xuan,
Chang Yi En, Chang Yi Yan
& Chang Yi Han
Siblings and many loved ones
Wake is held at 31 Sunrise Lane,
Singapore 806489 from Saturday
16 February 2019, 6.00pm onwards.
Night services on Saturday
and Sunday at 8.00pm.
Cortege leaves on Monday
18 February 2019 at 10.40am
for Mandai Crematorium Hall 2
for service at 11.40am.

Memory wanders
as shadows fall
Back to the days
of happiness,
Days beyond recall.
A vision comes before us,
So calm, so dear,
so sweet,
Of her lips now silent
And whose lids are
closed in sleep.



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life

D **SHADOW PLAY**
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Jeff Chin, 19

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DESIGN: JASTER NGUI ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

Snug spaces

Turn nooks and crannies at home
into oases of calm or pockets of fun.
Michelle Ng finds out how.
D4&5

Entrepreneur couple Dorjee Sun and Joanne Huynh
with their two children, Zigsa, two, and Zen, nine months,
at their outdoor balcony.

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TheChicHome



Black beauty

Black walls and furnishings give this apartment a bold yet intimate vibe

Eliza Hamizah

When a shadow is cast, you will see varying shades of black. The darkest part of the shadow is called umbra, while the lighter, greyer area is known as the penumbra.

This play on light and dark is central to this three-bedroom condominium apartment in Marine Parade designed by Mr Kelvin Lim, design director of Atelier Here.

The 1,300 sq ft home belongs to two professionals in their 30s, who give their names only as Mr and Mrs Yuen.

Mr Lim started with the main element – black walls – before softening it with layers of off-black and grey marble, tiles and soft furnishings.

“I also alternated between dark and bright areas. When lighting is designed this way, it can visually stretch the space and help signify different zones,” he says.

The home owners wanted a large communal space where they could eat, work and entertain in.

As a result, the space formerly occupied by a bedroom is now the living room. Black feature shelves, which conceal the television with a folding screen, separate the communal and private spaces of the home.

“We wanted a contemporary design that is more serious and subdued, made up of furniture in simpler forms, wood flooring, and touches of marble,” says Mrs Yuen.

While she says she does not cook much, the kitchen is her favourite space at home. “I just love looking at it.”

And it is no wonder.

Occupying the open kitchen is a 2.6m-long island clad in Fantasy Black, a strikingly beautiful marble that stands out against the dark kitchen cabinets.

Mr Lim paired this with the glossy surfaces of metal, such as stainless-steel open shelving and a powder-coated steel box encasing the hood, for a more refined look.

These high-end materials took up most of the renovation budget, which was about \$80,000. The design and renovation took about 4½ months and the owners moved into the apartment in December 2017.

With the expanded communal space, the living room has become even brighter – which is why the owners prefer a bold, dark interior.

Mr Lim says: “The private lift opens to a small and dark foyer, in which you can get a sea view if you turn to the side. Opening the door to a bright and spacious room makes quite the entrance.”

Wood pieces, like Bolia Bird dining chairs from Danish Design Co, as well as plants throughout the home provide pops of colour.

The bedroom was designed to feature a soothing and cool colour scheme.



The colour black is seen throughout the home, such as on the feature walls in the living room (above) as well as kitchen cabinets (top). PHOTOS: ATELIER HERE



Wood furniture, such as the Bolia Bird dining chairs, as well as plants give the home pops of colour.

As Mrs Yuen did not want a typical platform bed, Mr Lim customised a built-in bed frame, with a matching detachable headboard pillow.

The platform bed has an ash laminate while the bedroom wall is a blue-grey hue.

An open shelf at the foot of the bed offers more display space, while ambient floor lighting adds to the intimate ambience.

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This article first appeared in the January issue of Home & Decor, which is published by SPH Magazines.



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RootAwakening

Ficus needs sunny spot and well-drained soil to thrive

What kind of bonsai tree (right) is this and how do I take care of it? When I first saw it, there were many black hairy caterpillars around the roots – are these harming the tree?
Peter Loon

The plant is a Ficus species.

The most common species used to make such bonsai trees is the Indian Laurel Fig, botanically known as the Ficus microcarpa.

The plant should be grown on a sunny site and the soil should be well-drained.

To keep its form, periodic pruning needs to be done.

As for the caterpillars around the base of the plant, they can be removed and discarded if they bother you. Some individuals may be keen to keep them.

The caterpillars are probably the larvae of moths and they have an ecological role in the garden.

If they do not defoliate your plant – or even if they do and you can accept the transient, imperfect look of the tree – these caterpillars can be left alone.

Once they turn into adults, the damage will stop and there will be new growth.



Amazon Elephant's Ear may be lacking sunlight and water

The leaves of this plant (right) have been turning yellow. I place it in a shaded spot because I was told it is a shade-tolerant plant. How can I nurse it back to health?
Cheryl Teo

The plant may be the Amazon Elephant's Ear (Alocasia x mortfontanensis) or a related hybrid.

It thrives if it gets four to six hours of filtered sunshine daily. It should not be grown in the house where it is too dim to support growth. Under dim conditions, the plant will deteriorate over time.

The yellow patch could be a sign of burn due to excessive intense sunlight.

Move the plant to a location with filtered sunshine. Damaged leaves will not recover, but new growth will replace them with time.

The reason for the yellow leaves could also be due to a lack of water. When a plant lacks water for a prolonged period, one of the initial symptoms would be that some of the older leaves turn yellow and dry up.

However, also take note not to keep the roots wet all the time as the plant can succumb to root rot and die.

stlife@sph.com.sg



• Answers by Dr Wilson Wong, an NParks-certified practising horticulturist and park manager. He is the founder of Green Culture Singapore and an adjunct assistant professor (Food Science & Technology) at the National University of Singapore.

PHOTOS: CHERYL TEO, CYNTHIA YOW, DOMINIC THEN, PETER LOON, WINSTON LEE

• Have a gardening query? E-mail it with clear, high-resolution pictures of at least 1MB, if any, and your full name to stlife@sph.com.sg

Bird's nest fern has fungal disease

I bought an asplenium recently. Strangely, all the new leaves started to turn brown and mushy near the tips or in the middle (right). This does not affect the older leaves. What could be the cause?
Dominic Then

Your bird's nest fern (Asplenium nidus) appears to be suffering from a fungal disease.

To stop its spread, it is recommended that you cut away the entire affected leaves.

You may want to apply a chemical fungicide such as captan, available from most nurseries, to treat the issue.

Ensure that the plant gets sufficient sunlight – in this case, at least four to six hours of filtered sunlight – and good air circulation that is needed for healthy growth.

Also, check if any chemicals were applied on the plant – these may cause burns on the leaves as the fern may be sensitive to them.



An overdose of pesticide or fertiliser can also lead to similar symptoms. In such cases, damaged leaves can be cut away for new growth to replace them.

Test any chemical you want to apply on a small part of the plant before using it on the entire plant.

Fertilisers should be applied in lower doses than what is recommended on the label at the first instance as a precaution.

Mock Lime good choice for fragrant gardens

I got this plant which had white flowers. Now, there is a red fruit (right) which looks like a cherry tomato. What plant is this and is the fruit edible?
Cynthia Yow

It appears that the plant is the Kemuning, which has common names such as Mock Lime, China Box and Mock Orange and is botanically known as Murraya paniculata.

This plant can grow either as a shrub or a small tree and is commonly used for garden hedges.

It is appreciated for its scented white flowers, making it suitable for fragrant gardens.

The fruit is documented to be edible according to a number of sources, although this plant is not



commonly regarded as an edible fruit plant species.

Before consuming any part of a plant, its identity must be verified.

Scant information about whether small-leafed noni's fruit is edible

What is the name of this plant (right) and is the fruit edible?
Winston Lee

The plant appears to be the Mengkudu Daun Kecil, which means small-leafed noni in Malay. Its botanical name is Morinda angustifolia.

It is a relative of the noni tree (Morinda citrifolia), which is well known for its edible fruit and leaves.

This Morinda species can be seen sometimes as a self-sown plant in housing estates and disused areas, probably spread via seed dispersal by animals like birds.

The fruit of this tree is very small and not much has been documented about its edible uses.

The plant's leaves reportedly have traditional medicinal uses.



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‘Ugly’ opera house draws crowds

While widely regarded as one of the ugliest theatres in Europe, Paris’ Opera Bastille is lauded for bringing the art form to more people



PARIS • The Opera Bastille was a laughing stock before it was even built.

Turning 30 this year, the larger and more modern of the Paris Opera’s two theatres is widely regarded as one of the ugliest in Europe. And its comically embarrassing origin story – which even Mr Stephane Lissner, the company’s director, tells through chuckles – begins with a mistake.

The long-serving French president Francois Mitterrand ordered a new opera house to be built in the early 1980s as one of his Grands Projets, like the I.M. Pei-designed Louvre Pyramid and the Grande Arche of La Defense.

After receiving more than 700 proposals, with the architects’ names kept hidden, Mr Mitterrand and his aides chose a design they thought was by Richard Meier.

It was not. The name that was unveiled was Carlos Ott, a relatively unknown Uruguayan-Canadian architect who did not have any major credits on his resume.

But Mr Mitterrand moved forward with the project, committing to a

behemoth that became the third-largest building in the city, after two other Grands Projets – the enormous Bibliotheque Nationale and the Ministry for the Economy and Finance.

Originally planned for the Parc de la Villette area on the outskirts of Paris, the theatre was moved to the Place de la Bastille, where the famous prison once stood.

The location made sense for the opening date, meant to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the start of the French Revolution, when the prison was stormed by insurgents.

And by the 1980s, the Bastille was a working-class area; this new opera house was conceived with a broadened public in mind.

On that front, the Opera Bastille has been a success: The average age of its audience is nearly 10 years younger than that of the Metropolitan Opera, and it is not unusual for the Paris Opera to sell out both the 19th-century Palais Garnier (its 2,000-seat house in the expensive centre of town, now primarily home to ballet and small-scale opera) and the 2,700-seat Bastille.

“I think a lot of people don’t like the building,” said Mr Lissner. “But the big majority today believes it was worth it because a lot of people are able to go to the opera”, with more seats and more diverse programming available.

But while the Bastille has been a blessing in some respects – it also provided a wealth of new spaces for rehearsals and workshops – it has been glumly tolerated and mocked for virtually all of its existence.

The eminent French critic Christian Merlin, who attended the earliest productions at the Bastille, recalled finding the building “impressive but cold and grey, somewhat anonymous”.

Mr Lissner said it is “absolutely not convincing, aesthetically, from the outside”.

Inside is not much different. Even entering is a challenge: The door appears to be on the second floor, accessible by way of a grand staircase.

But it is rarely used and newcomers are left to find the real entrance on the ground floor.

Despite the building’s size, the lobby spaces are narrow, crowded

and brightly lit; it is nearly impossible to make it through an entire intermission without getting pushed.

The theatre itself, which occupies only about 5 per cent of the building, is devoid of warmth: Its stone walls and fixtures have all the charm of a hotel convention centre. Balcony seats were designed to offer clear views of the stage – which they do, at the cost of some vertigo.

Singers and directors alike must contend with the cavernous space. Mr Manuel Brug, a German critic who has been visiting the theatre for years, said it is “not possible to be intimate” there.

There have been some improvement efforts. To celebrate the Paris Opera’s 350th anniversary and the anniversary of the Bastille, this season, the company commissioned artist Claude Leveque to create installations, collectively called Saturnales, for both its theatres.

Light rods top the Bastille’s facade like a minimalist tiara – they can be seen from around the neighbourhood.

And Mr Lissner, after taking over

the company in 2015, installed a large screen above the steps of the Bastille, where he keeps his primary office. He spruced it up with furniture from the Garnier.

“When you are outside, you can’t tell what kind of building this is,” he said. “So I decided to put this screen outside to show the programme and images of the opera.”

It is unlikely the Bastille will change further any time soon. Mr Lissner said that would be difficult and expensive. Mr Merlin hopes that the acoustics will eventually be improved.

But the Paris Opera is planning a new space there – a modular one, as once promised to influential composer and conductor Pierre Boulez, with room for an audience of 800 – that is expected to open in 2023.

After holding a competition, the company recently hired Danish firm Henning Larsen Architects, known for the Copenhagen Opera House and the Harpa concert hall in Reykjavik.

This time, there was no mistake about whose design had been chosen. NYTIMES

The Opera Bastille, which turns 30 this year, was the design of Uruguayan-Canadian architect Carlos Ott.

PHOTO: NYTIMES

Ceilings reach new heights in style

WASHINGTON • What does the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City have in common with a house for a family of eight in Lutherville, United States?

The ceilings in these spaces demand that you look up.

“Statement ceiling” is a term designers use to describe a ceiling that has been given extra attention, sometimes even making it a focal point of a room.

And Ms Elizabeth Reich of Jenkins Baer Associates, an interior design company in Baltimore, said that “statement” can be anything a person wants it to be.

“The ceiling is a huge part of the overall impact on how you’re going to feel in the space,” she said. “There’s a lot of different ways you can make it stand out and give the space a lot more character.”

Ms Reich recently posted an Instagram photo of an ornate ceiling at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. In the picture, a wooden staircase winds around a light-blue stained-glass statement ceiling.

“Historically, when they built these, they paid a lot of attention to those kinds of architectural details, and they had these amazing craftsmen who turned your plain ceiling into a masterpiece,” she said.

Although what Ms Reich saw in the museum is not realistic to replicate in the average home, she believes ceilings in any kind of room – living rooms, bedrooms, dining rooms, powder rooms – can be enhanced.

So what is the best way to maximise a ceiling’s potential?

Ms Quintece Hill-Mattauszek, an Alexandria, Virginia, designer who is a “pattern fanatic”, said a lot of people forget about their vertical real estate. “A lot of times when you’re in a bedroom, you’re on your back,” she said. “So it’s really nice to see something really cool.”

Ms Reich says interesting wallpaper is particularly smart for powder rooms because their small size means not much is needed to make a big impact. “You can also do a con-



A statement ceiling designed by Ms Elizabeth Reich of Jenkins Baer Associates. PHOTO: JAMIE SENTZ

trust wallpaper on the ceiling to add texture or graphic interest. It’s always fun to do something unexpected in a powder room.”

For wallpaper on a bedroom ceiling, she has used grass cloth for a calming effect. “I tend to like the ceilings in bedrooms to be beautiful and serene, since this is your place to relax and unwind.”

Coffered ceilings can provide a timeless look, and beams or planks can add character that will complement many styles.

Ms Andrea Houck, an interior designer in Arlington, Virginia, is working on a silver dining room ceiling in McLean.

She recently dedicated a blog post to the design element, calling the ceiling a “fifth wall”. She described ceilings she had painted in verdant green and soft blue, and

highlighted some of her favourite rooms by other designers, including a bathroom by designer Amanda Nisbet with white walls and a lavender ceiling.

Without the unexpected ceiling colour, she said, Ms Nisbet’s white bathroom “would be predictable and mundane”. And the finishes – high-gloss on the walls and matt on the ceiling – provide contrast.

Alternatively, a high-gloss ceiling could formalise a space, Ms Reich said. Any colours can be used to create lacquer, or high-gloss, finish, but dark colours, such as blue, work particularly well, she said.

“I think a ceiling is another piece that people just can’t forget about,” Ms Houck said. “It’s so important. You can just tweak the colour ever so slightly and totally change the feeling in the room.” WASHINGTON POST



A lavender ceiling in a bathroom by Amanda Nisbet Design. PHOTO: MAX KIM-BEE



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Publisher makes headway in S-E Asia

Penguin Random House South-east Asia, which is headquartered in Singapore, will put out close to 100 titles this year

Olivia Ho

The world's largest trade publisher, Penguin Random House, will be entering South-east Asia with a bang this year by putting out close to 100 titles.

Its new South-east Asian publishing arm, headquartered in Singapore, yesterday launched its inaugural catalogue of 93 titles, which features writers from 10 countries in the genres of fiction, non-fiction, children's and learning.

These include books by Singapore-based authors, among them an otherworldly urban murder mystery by Krishna Udayasankar, a short story collection on diaspora by Elaine Chiew and a light-hearted comic novel on Bishan beauty parlours by Straits Times journalist Akshita Nanda.

From elsewhere in the region, there are titles by best-selling Indonesian novelist Laksmi Pamuntjak; Indian writer Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, who won the British Betty Trask Award for debut novels; and Filipino journalist Rene Acosta, who has written about the war on terror in the Philippines.

Penguin Random House India and South-east Asia (SEA) chief executive Gaurav Shrinagesh, 48, told The Straits Times that Singapore was chosen as the venture's headquarters because geographically, it is "perfectly placed to access the region".

Other draws, he added, include its evolved book market and infrastructure, such as the National Arts Council's Singapore Writers Festival, awards such as the Singapore Litera-



Penguin Random House India and South-east Asia chief executive Gaurav Shrinagesh and the Singapore office's executive editor Nora Nazerene Abu Bakar (both left).
ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

ture Prize and even the fledgling #BuySingLit movement, which supports home-grown writing.

Over the next few years, Penguin Random House SEA aims to build a catalogue of about 500 titles. While the titles it is publishing so far are in English, it is also looking at translating works into other languages.

"We want to provide authors a platform to engage with a larger readership within the Asian community and potentially look at how to give them voices internationally," he said.

The Singapore office is fronted by executive editor Nora Nazerene Abu Bakar, 41, who has 13 years of publishing experience with publishers such as Marshall Cavendish Education.

She said she receives between three and six manuscripts a week and looks in particular for stories with a South-east Asian context.

Some prominent themes in the works she has selected include war and diaspora, as well as cause-driven stories for children.

Singaporean children's author Don Bosco, 47, who will be publish-

ing interactive thriller series Last Kid Running with Penguin Random House SEA, said: "It seriously feels like a giant alien spaceship has suddenly appeared, zapped me up and inserted me into an unbelievable new reality."

"Last year, I was making up stories for Singapore readers. This year, I'm making up stories for readers across South-east Asia and the world."

Among the debut writers picked was Singapore-based South Korean Sun Jung, 46, whose novel Bukit

Brown was inspired by the stories of the immigrants buried in Bukit Brown cemetery.

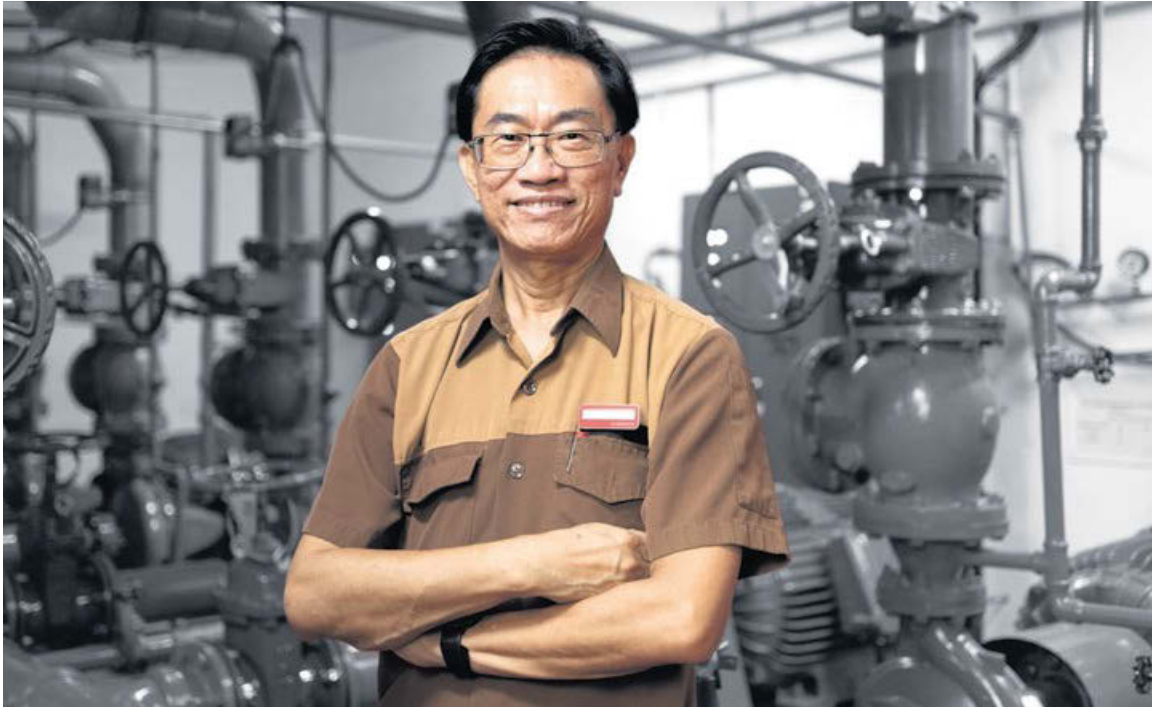
In her novel, a Korean woman in cosmopolitan Singapore travels back in time to 19th-century British Malaya.

She said: "I hope a wider group of readers beyond the region will acknowledge and appreciate the hard lives of early – and indeed current – migrant workers in this region and further afield."

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FIND YOUR PASSION IN HOSPITALITY

ATTEND THE OPEN HOTELS WEEKEND TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HOTEL INDUSTRY AND KICKSTART A NEW CAREER IN THE BUSINESS OF HAPPINESS



BY NIVANIELANGOVAN

Mr Chua Keng Chua could have retired when he turned 62 four years ago, but he is still happily employed as an engineering technician at PARKROYAL on Kitchener Road, Singapore.

He handles the maintenance of various services in the hotel, including electrical, plumbing and air-conditioning, as well as engineering complaints.

Mr Chua used to be with the construction industry and took on several jobs before semi-retiring in 2010. Prior to that, he held a seven-year stint as an assistant technical manager at Hotel Malaysia (later renamed Omni Marco Polo Hotel before it was torn down in 1999).

Last August, he visited the Open Hotels Weekend and participated in exclusive behind-the-scenes career tours and on-the-spot interviews. Through that, he was inspired to make a return to the hospitality industry.

He applied for and was offered his

"I was able to tour the hotel and see how everything operates. The friendly and helpful environment at the hotel motivated me to re-join the industry."

– Mr Chua Keng Chua (above), 66, engineering technician at PARKROYAL on Kitchener Road, Singapore

current position at PARKROYAL on Kitchener Road that enables him to contribute what he does best.

During his tour, Mr Chua also got to meet some of the managers to have an understanding of their management style.

"I was able to tour the hotel and see how everything operates," he says. "The friendly and helpful environment at the hotel motivated me to re-join the industry."

A year has passed since Mr Chua joined the hotel and his passion for the hospitality sector has been rekindled. With friendly colleagues who are willing to help him to pick up new skills, he knows that he is in the right place.

"My job satisfaction comes from the joy guests feel when I fix issues in a timely manner and make sure facilities are in working order," he says.

MAKING PEOPLE HAPPY

Besides helping mid-career switchers realise their passions, Open Hotels Weekend has also been able to engage with and draw young talents to the hotel industry.

Mr K Dinesh Raaj, 23, had just completed his National Service when he came across the Singapore Hotel Association Facebook page, which profiles the hotel industry as the Business of Happiness and its employees as Ambassadors of Happiness. The Nanyang Polytechnic graduate in hospitality and tourism management says the posts about various hotel associates who enjoy their jobs through making others happy inspired him to join the hospitality industry.

He submitted an application for an on-the-spot job interview via the Open Hotels Weekend registration website and secured a job as an event coordinator at JW Marriott Singapore South Beach.

Like Mr Chua, he was also able to go on a tour of the hotel and understand more about the hotel's core values.

Mr Raaj says: "Having the chance to see what goes on behind the scenes at the hotel to provide guests with the highest quality of service spurred me to do my best for the interview, so that I could be part of such an amazing industry."

His current responsibilities include arranging the hotel's internal events such as department meetings, birthday celebrations and festive events for Marriott International, and supporting a team of event managers for larger events. His current job scope gives him an inspiring view of what his future at the hotel might look like.

Mr Raaj credits his managers for helping him to integrate well in the department and for providing much-needed guidance.

"I feel fortunate to be working with an amazing team and I look forward to bringing joy to others on my hospitality journey," he says.



"Having the chance to see what goes on behind the scenes at the hotel to provide guests with the highest quality of service spurred me to do my best for the interview, so that I could be part of such an amazing industry."

– Mr K Dinesh Raaj (below), 23, event coordinator at JW Marriott Singapore South Beach

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Bop along to hip-hop success

Inspired by the real-life rags-to-riches stories of Mumbai rappers Divine and Naezy, Gully Boy has plenty of heart



In Gully Boy, Ranveer Singh stars as a wannabe rapper who breaks free of his circumstances by drawing on his experiences as material for his hip-hop songs.

PHOTO: EXCEL ENTERTAINMENT

[illegible]REVIEW / BOLLYWOOD
DRAMA ROMANCE

.....
GULLY BOY (PG13)

155 minutes/Now showing/★★★★☆

The story: An aspiring rapper called Murad (Ranveer Singh) from the slums of Mumbai breaks free from his circumstances and the "gully" (the streets) to chase his dream.

Anjali Raguraman

In one of the opening scenes of Bollywood rap movie *Gully Boy*, protagonist Murad plugs in his earphones to drown out the strains of a small wedding procession entering his home as his father Shakir (Vijay Raaz) takes a second wife.

The marriage is the source of much family tension to come in the film. But hip-hop music is solace for Murad, who calls the gritty Mumbai slum of Dharavi home.

The track of choice? American rapper A\$AP Rocky's *Everyday*, a cautionary tale about fame and fortune.

It is early days yet for either fame or fortune, however, as the movie follows Murad's journey from scrib-

"Don't wanna be a slumdog millionaire, I'm on a mission," he raps at one point.

He desires to break free from his circumstances – including a job that he detests and a driver-father who constantly chides him that his “dreams should fit (his) reality”.

At the same time, he draws on them for his material, seizing the moment as he does on the track *Apna Time Aayega* (My Time Will Come).

The Zoya Akhtar-directed film was inspired by the real-life rags-to-riches stories of Mumbai rappers Divine and Naezy.

In fact, the music video for one of their songs, 2016's *Mere Gully Mein* – an ode to the streets where they grew up – is recreated in the film.

Singh, who has had a slew of flamboyant, over-the-top roles of late (a manic conqueror in *Padmaavat*, and a flashy, bad cop-turned-good in *Simmba*, both released last year), reels it in for his take on Murad, in a raw and believable performance that is all heart.

There is restraint and vulnerability when necessary, and panache and the required rapper braggadocio, as his character gains confidence and commands the stage.

The supporting cast bolsters his performance. Alia Bhatt's Safeena, his volatile on-and-off love interest, hides a firecracker of a personality behind a mischievous smile, and Siddhant Chaturvedi, who plays his mentor MC Sher, is a revelation with his confidence and swagger.

There are heavyweights behind the scenes too, including a co-executive producer credit for American rapper Nas, and an original score by American-Indian multi-instrumentalist Kersh Kala.

But even with all the catchy music and the presence of real-life Mumbai rappers in the film like Kaam Bhari and MC Altaf lending it credibility, the slickness of the Bollywood production dulls the rough edges of this story of struggle.

Gully Boy feels like the "lite" version of Divine and Naezy's stories, and one that is almost overshadowed by the predictable message of "if you dream it, you can do it".

But either way, be forewarned. It is going to be hard not to bob to the tunes while you watch this film.

anjalir@sph.com.sg

Comics

BABY BLUES



GARFIELD



Free to air

CHANNEL 5

AM
6.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (HD) (V)
6.45 Just For Laughs Gags 17 (V)
7.00 The Dr Oz Show 8 (HD) (IE)
8.00 On The Red Dot – Risky Business (CA)
8.30 Wheel Of Fortune 35 (HD) (V)
9.30 Secret Meat Business (IE)
10.00 Euromaxx (Cul)
10.30 Arts 21 (Cul)
11.00 Worst Cooks In America 7 – Celebrity Edition (HD) (PG) (IE)
PM
12.00 Everyday Gourmet 3 (HD) (IE)
12.30 Films & Stars (PG) (V)
1.00 America's Got Talent 12 (HD) (PG) (V)
3.00 Little Big Shots: Forever Young (PG) (V)
4.00 Make You Laugh Out Loud 3 (PG) (V)
5.00 Designer In The House 2 (HD) (V)
5.30 Divided (US) (HD) (PG) (V)
6.00 Hungry For Love (HD) (V)
6.30 Battleship (PG) (CC) (M)
9.00 News Tonight (HD)
9.30 The Strangest Weather On Earth 2 (HD) (CC) (IE) (Finale)
10.00 Lights Out (PG13) (M)
11.40 The Shannara Chronicles (PG13) (D)
AM
12.30 Grimm 5 (HD) (PG13) (D)
2.10 Timeless (HD) (PG) (D)
3.00 Worst Cooks In America 7 – Celebrity Edition (PG) (IE)
3.50 Films & Stars (PG) (V)
4.20 Wheel Of Fortune 35 (HD) (V)
5.10 The Dr Oz Show 8 (HD) (IE)

CHANNEL 8

AM
6.00 Neighbourhood Chef 2 (HD) (V)
7.00 Portrait Of Home 2 (D)
9.00 Smart Kid (S)
9.30 Firerobo (S)
10.00 The Adv Of Little Carp (S)
10.30 All New Jackie Chan Adventures (S)
11.00 The Love 97.2 Breakfast Quartet 2 (CC) (V)
PM
12.00 Please Be My Guest! 2 (CC) (V)
1.00 Golden Age Talentime (HD) (CC) (V)
2.00 Challenge The Impossible 2 (HD) (V)

4.00 Emergency! (CC) (V)
4.30 Beyond Words (PG) (CC) (D)
6.30 Singapore Today (HD) (News)
7.00 Spring Flower (PG) (CC) (D)
9.00 The Sheng Siong Show 24 (V)
10.00 News Tonight (HD)
10.30 Saturday Cinema: Lucky Star (PG) (CC) (M)
AM
12.30 My Amazing Bride (PG) (CC) (D)
2.30 Behind Every Job (IE)
3.30 The Ten Deadly Sins (PG13) (D)
4.00 The Deer And The Cauldron (HD) (PG) (D)

CHANNEL U

AM
10.00 Shake It Up (V)
11.30 Project W (IE)
PM
12.30 Blue Tick (PG) (CC) (D)
1.30 World Food (CC) (IE)
2.30 Family Wanders (V)
3.00 Golden Rainbow (PG) (CC) (D)
5.00 Mrs Cop (PG) (CC) (D)
7.00 Puzzle Masters (V)
9.00 The Entertainer (PG) (CC) (D)
11.00 News Tonight
11.30 Puzzle Masters (V)
AM
1.30 Lord Of Shanghai (PG) (CC) (D)
2.30 Close

CNA

AM
6.00 Singapore Tonight
7.00 News Now
7.30 Correspondents' Diary
8.00 News Now
8.30 This Weekend
9.00 News Now
9.30 Asia Business First Weekend
10.02 Bridging The Skills Gap: Beyond Classrooms
11.00 News Now
11.30 Conversation With
PM
12.00 News Now
12.30 Once A Refugee
1.02 Conversation With
1.30 Super Octogenarians
2.00 News Now
2.30 This Weekend
3.00 News Now
3.30 Asia Business First Weekend

4.02 Insight
5.00 News Now
5.30 Once A Refugee
6.00 News Now
6.30 This Weekend
7.02 Japan Hour (English Subtitles)
8.00 Primetime Asia
8.30 Correspondents' Diary
9.02 Trump's Showdown (CC)
10.00 Singapore Tonight
10.30 Money Mind
11.02 Japan Hour (English Subtitles)
AM
12.00 News Now
12.30 Conversation With
1.02 Correspondents' Diary
1.30 Money Mind
2.00 News Now
2.30 Once A Refugee
3.02 Insight
4.00 News Now
4.30 Money Mind
5.02 Wild City
Programmes may be pre-empted by breaking news

VASANTHAM

PM
1.00 Thanga Gopuram (PG) (M)
4.00 Dil Tera Aashiq (PG) (M)
7.00 Thirai Express (HD) (CC) (V)
8.00 Vera Level (HD) (CC) (IE)
8.30 Tamil Seithi (News)
9.00 96 (PG) (CC) (M)
AM
12.00 Tamil Seithi (News) (R)
12.30 Close

OKTO

AM
7.00 Floogals (P)
8.00 Let's Go Pocoyo (P)
8.30 Wissper (HD) (P)
9.00 Littlest Pet Shop (S)
9.30 Metalions (S)
10.00 Pokemon The Series: Sun And Moon (HD) (S)
10.30 Smurfs (HD) (S)
11.00 Lego Ninjago 9 – Hunted (S)
11.30 Extreme Football (HD) (S)
PM
12.00 Totally Totto (HD) (S)
12.30 Exlosers 2 (D)
1.00 Loud House (S)
1.30 Jane And The Dragon (S)
2.00 Inazuma Eleven (S)

2.30 The Deep (HD) (S)
3.00 Future Card Buddyfight (HD) (PG) (S)
3.30 CardFight! Vanguard G: NEXT (HD) (S)
4.00 Bear Grylls Survival School (HD) (S)
4.30 Loud House (S)
5.00 Jane And The Dragon (S)
5.30 Inazuma Eleven (S)
6.00 Basic Mini-tary Training (S)
6.30 Museum Mysteries (S)
7.00 The Deep (HD) (CC) (S)
7.30 Future Card Buddyfight (HD) (CC) (S)
8.00 CardFight! Vanguard G: Next (HD) (CC) (S)
8.30 Bear Grylls Survival School (HD) (CC) (S)

9.00 Sportsmax (HD) (Sports)
9.30 Whacked Out Sports (PG) (V)
10.00 ONE Championship 2018/19: Clash Of Legends (Bangkok) (PG13) (Sports)
AM
12.00 Close

SURIA

PM
3.00 Ye Ke?! (V)
4.00 Adakah Aku Bersalah (PG) (CC) (Telemovie)
6.00 Skuad Cilik (CC) (S)
6.30 Kerjayaan Wanita: 8 Wanita Singapura 2014 (CC) (IE)
7.00 Ronda Ronda (CC) (IE) (Debut)
7.30 Resipi Rahsia 2 (CC) (IE)
8.00 Berita (HD) (News)
8.30 Sepahtu Reunion Live 2 (CC) (V) (Finale)
9.30 Setia Menunggumu (PG) (CC) (D)
10.30 Extreme Roadtrip (IE)
11.00 Detik (PG) (CA)
11.30 Berita (HD) (News) (R)
AM
12.00 Close

C: Children; CA: Current Affairs; CC: Closed Captions; Cul: Culture; D: Drama; IE: Info-Ed; M: Movies; P: Preschool; PG: Parental Guidance; R: Repeat; S: Schoolkids; SC: Sitcom; V: Variety

Programme schedules correct at time of printing. Telecast details from Mediacorp, StarHub and Singtel TV. For pay TV updates, go to www.starhub.com/tv or www.singtelv.com.sg

TheStarsSay

Aries (March 21 - April 19)
Do not suppress your feelings. You need to make sure you are speaking from the heart.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)
Are you single? If so, it is time to step up and ask someone out. Risk-taking is definitely rewarded.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)
Life is getting away from you, but make a task list so that you can take care of whatever is most important.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)
Start over in some way. It gives you the opportunity to get a leg-up on something new from scratch.

Leo (July 23 - Aug 22)
Your intuitive side is out in force. Ensure you make the most of it. Listen to your gut before making decisions.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22)
Things are getting freaky, but your emotional state should be strong if you are among good people.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)
Things are not going your way. Be flexible. Bend with the wind, then find a way to work with the situation.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)
Try something totally new. You have to put this dramatic energy to good use soon.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
Your relationships need attention. Be there for the people who need you. Take better care of yourself too.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
You feel the need to be elsewhere. Deal with your feelings instead of taking off to somewhere new.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)
Do not dwell on past mistakes or present tensions. Channel your energy forward and move ahead.

Pisces (Feb 19 - March 20)
Your dreams are vivid. You might want to get some information out of them. It is a good time for changes.

• Provided by Astrology.com (www.astrology.com)

Radio

KISS92 (TODAY)

AM
6.00 Desiree Lai
PM
12.00 Charmaine Yee
8.00 Jill Lim

KISS92 (TOMORROW)

AM
6.00 American Top 40 With Ryan Seacrest
PM
12.00 Jill Lim

ONE FM 91.3 (TODAY)

AM
6.00 Cheryl Miles
PM
12.00 Harry Corro

ONE FM 91.3 (TOMORROW)

PM
12.00 Harry Corro

MONEY FM 89.3 (WEEKENDS)

AM
7.00 Weekend Mornings With Jason Dasey

Tides

SUN RISE/SET TIME: 7:17am/7:21pm
MOON RISE/SET TIME: 4:06pm/3:39am

TIDES TODAY: Singapore: 1.20am (1.7m), 7.20am (2.6m), 2.24pm (0.7m), 9.58pm (2.4m). Desaru: 1.22am (2m), 5.54am (2.3m), 1.33pm (1m), 9.28pm (2.5m). Port Dickson: 4.02am (2.2m), 10.37am (1m), 4.10pm (1.8m), 10.46pm (0.5m). Mersing: 1.20am (2.1m), 5.05am (2.3m), 12.24pm (1m), 8.30pm (3m).

TIDES TOMORROW: Singapore: 2.43am (1.7m), 8.41am (2.7m), 3.24pm (0.5m), 10.48pm (2.7m). Desaru: 2.45am (2m), 7.07am (2.4m), 2.39pm (0.8m), 10.22pm (2.7m). Port Dickson: 5.02am (2.4m), 11.51am (0.8m), 5.23pm (2.1m), 11.54pm (0.2m). Mersing: 2.42am (2.1m), 6.34am (2.3m), 1.38pm (0.9m), 9.28pm (3.2m).

For updates and more details, call Meteorological Service Singapore, NEA, on 6542-7788 or go to www.nea.gov.sg

StarHub TV

HISTORY (CHANNEL 401)

AM
9.30 Swamp Mysteries With Troy Landry
10.25 Alone 4/11.20 The Tesla Files
PM
12.15 Hunting ISIS
1.10 Mountain Men 7
2.05 Swamp Mysteries With Troy Landry
3.00 Alone 4/3.55 Head To Head
4.25 The Pickers 9/5.20 Road Hawks
6.15 Counting Cars 7/7.10 Pawn Stars 18
7.35 Storage Wars 11
8.05 History Drama: Project Blue Book
9.00 The Curse Of Oak Island 5
9.55 The Pickers 13

LIFETIME (CHANNEL 514)

AM
9.00 Married At First Sight Australia 4
PM
12.00 Born This Way 2
1.00 This Time Next Year
1.55 Snowed Inn Christmas
3.30 The Lover In The Attic: A True Story
5.05 Gok's Fill Your House For Free
6.00 Married At First Sight US 5
8.00 Love At First Flight
10.00 Drink, Slay, Love
11.35 Beyond The Headlines

HBO (CHANNEL 601)

AM
7.30 Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius
8.50 Failure To Launch
10.25 Transformers: The Last Knight (NC16)
PM
1.00 Ready Player One (NC16)
3.15 Robin Hood/5.30 Lilo & Stitch
6.55 King Arthur: Legend Of The Sword (NC16)/9.00 Rampage (NC16)
10.45 True Detective 3 (NC16)
11.45 Body Of Lies
AM
1.45 There Will Be Blood
4.20 Modern Life Is Rubbish

CINEMAX (CHANNEL 611)

AM
9.20 Catwoman
11.00 Strike Back 6 (NC16)
PM
12.00 Killing Gunther (NC16)
1.30 Sleepless (NC16)
3.05 The Marc Pease Experience
4.30 Coach Carter/6.45 Atomica
8.10 Entrapment (PG)
10.00 Strike Back 6 (NC16)/11.00 Red (PG)
AM
12.50 The Last Boy Scout (NC16)
2.30 Return Of The Living Dead Part II (NC16)/3.55 Painkiller Jane
5.15 Get Smart's Bruce And Lloyd Out Of Control

HUB CITY (CHANNEL 825)

AM
7.00 Chinese Restaurant 2 (HD)

9.00 Noble Aspirations (HD)

PM
12.00 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)
1.00 Mr Player 7 (HD)
3.00 Singer 2019 (HD)
5.00 Viva La Romance (HD)
7.00 Perfect Match 6 (HD)
8.45 Wok Of Love (HD)
11.15 Happy Camp 2 (HD)

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

AM
7.00 ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2019: Men Free Skating
11.00 Multi Sport: Fise World Series Highlights 2018: Chengdu
PM
12.00 ATP 500 ABN Amro World Tennis Tournament: Day 5 Quarter-finals
7.30 Tennis: ATP Champions Tour 2018
8.00 Spirit Of Yachting 2018 Show 6: Rolex Sydney Hobart Yacht Race (Alive & Kicking)
8.30 FEI Equestrian World 2019
9.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2018
10.00 ATP 500 ABN Amro World Tennis Tournament : Day 6 Semi-finals 1
AM
12.00 Mountain Bike: Crankworx World Tour 2018: Whistler Highlights
1.00 BMX Supercross 2017: Lane 1 – Show 3
1.30 Extreme Sports: World Surf League 2018: Billabong Pipe Masters Highlights

HUB SPORTS 2 (CHANNEL 202)

AM
6.00 Marathon Xiamen Marathon 2019 Highlights
7.00 Football: Coppa Italia 2018/19 Quarter-finals Atalanta Vs Juventus
9.00 Basketball: Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Zhuhai Wolf Warriors Vs San Miguel Alab Pilipinas
11.00 Magazine: Omnisport.TV
11.30 Basketball: National Basketball League Round 18 Sydney Kings Vs Cairns Taipans (Live)
PM
1.30 Basketball: Fiba World Basketball 2019
2.00 Magazine: The Football Review
2.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV
3.00 Basketball: Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Formosa Dreamers Vs Saigon Heat (Live)
5.00 Wrestling: WWE Bottomline (PG)
6.00 Rugby: HSBC World Rugby Sevens World Series 2018/19 Round 3 Hamilton: Match 41 15th Place
6.30 Rugby: HSBC World Rugby Sevens World Series 2018/19 Round 3 Hamilton: Match 42 Challenge Trophy
7.00 Rugby: HSBC World Rugby Sevens World Series 2018/19 Round 3 Hamilton: Match 43 5th Place
7.30 Magazine: Omnisport.TV
8.00 Basketball: Asean Basketball League 2018/19 CLS Knights Indonesia Vs Mono Vampire Basketball Club (Live)
10.00 Wrestling: WWE Afterburn (PG)
10.55 Football: EFL League One 2018 Matchday 33 Aston Villa Vs West Bromwich Albion (Live)
AM
1.00 Wrestling: WWE Bottomline (PG)

Singtel TV

CARTOON NETWORK (CHANNEL 226)

AM
6.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show
7.55 The Heroic Quest Of The Valiant Prince Ivandoe
8.00 Teen Titans Go!
9.30 Craig Of The Creek
10.00 Apple & Onion
10.30 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
11.00 Craig Of The Creek
11.30 Unikitty
PM
12.00 Ben 10
12.30 The Amazing World Of Gumball
1.00 Craig Of The Creek
1.30 Running Man Animation
2.00 We Bare Bears
2.30 The Powerpuff Girls
3.00 Summer Camp Island
3.30 Supernooobs
4.00 Ben 10
4.30 Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs
5.00 Teen Titans Go!
6.00 OK K.O.!! Let's Be Heroes
6.30 Ben 10
7.00 Craig Of The Creek
8.00 Running Man Animation
9.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches
9.30 We Bare Bears
10.00 Regular Show
10.30 Steven Universe
11.00 Clarence
11.30 Adventure Time

AXN (HD) (CHANNEL 304)

AM
6.00 Supernatural 14
6.50 The Amazing Race 29
9.25 MacGyver 3
10.15 Seal Team 2
11.05 Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior
PM
12.45 The Blacklist 6
1.35 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2
2.25 Asia's Got Talent 3
3.50 Instinct
4.40 Seal Team 2
5.30 Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior
7.15 Team Ninja Warrior 2
9.05 MacGyver 3
10.00 Hawaii Five-0 9
10.55 The Blacklist 6

11.50 Asia's Got Talent 3

WARNER TV (HD) (CHANNEL 306)

AM
6.00 Major Crimes 5
10.10 Gotham 5
11.00 The Big Bang Theory 12
11.25 Young Sheldon 2
11.50 Race To The Scene
PM
1.30 Troy
4.25 Hall Pass
6.10 Superman Returns
9.00 Blindspot 4
9.50 Man Of Steel

COMEDY CENTRAL ASIA (HD) (CHANNEL 324)

AM
6.00 The Daily Show 24
7.15 Just For Laughs Gags 14
8.05 Super Ultimate Candid Camera
8.35 Mr Bean
9.35 Brotherhood
10.30 I Live With Models
11.25 Lip Sync Battle 4
PM
12.45 The Goldbergs 5
1.35 Hot in Cleveland 6
2.25 Saturday Night Live 43
3.15 The Comedy Jam
4.05 The Goldbergs 5
4.55 Hot In Cleveland 6
5.40 Saturday Night Live 43
6.30 Amazingness
7.20 Comedy Central Roast Of James Franco
8.40 Stand-up, Asia! 3
9.10 The Jim Jefferies Show
10.00 Saturday Night Live 44
11.05 50 Central
11.50 Inside Amy Schumer 2

JIA LE (HD) (CHANNEL 502)

AM
6.00 Stylish Man
7.00 Super Nightclub
8.30 Top Singers
10.00 All Out Of Love
PM
12.00 Stylish Man
1.00 Super Nightclub
2.30 All Out Of Love
4.30 Top Singers
6.00 Stylish Man
7.00 All Out Of Love
9.00 The Legend Of Golden Music
10.00 Glorious World
10.30 The Golden Melodies 2018

Singer Ryan Adams under sex probe?

NEW YORK • Singer-songwriter Ryan Adams (inset), who said he is not a perfect man after sexual misconduct claims surfaced, is reportedly being probed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation over whether he engaged in sexually explicit communication with an underage fan.

The New York Times reported on Wednesday that a woman said her online contact with Adams, 44,

began when she was 14 and continued until she was 16.

On Thursday, FBI agents reportedly opened a criminal probe. If they find her account credible, they could get her cellphone and Adams' records.

A lawyer for the woman, now 20,



declined to comment.

The Times reviewed communication between Adams and her, including tweets that began when she was 14, and more than 3,000 text messages spanning a nine-month period when she was 15 and 16.

The messages from late 2014, when she was 16, included explicit photographs of her. She said the pair also conducted video calls on Skype, where Adams exposed him-

self during phone sex.

Throughout their exchange, he asked repeatedly about her age. "Do me a paranoid favour," he wrote in November 2014, when she was 16. "Show me you are 18."

After the publication of the article, Adams tweeted to apologise to "anyone I have ever hurt, however unintentionally", though he disputed the accuracy of the reporting.

Other women interviewed by

The Times said he often dangled potential career opportunities as he pursued female artists in sexual scenarios.

"Music was a point of control for him," said his ex-wife, singer-actress Mandy Moore.

The allegations that Adams manipulated and harassed women in the industry sent ripples through the business. "We're all fed up," singer Vanessa Carlton tweeted. NYTIMES

New tape shows R. Kelly having sex with minor

LOS ANGELES • It could be "the break that prosecutors have needed for the better part of 20 years", said lawyer Michael Avenatti.

On Thursday, he turned over to the authorities a tape that shows R. Kelly (right) allegedly having sex with a 14-year-old.



Mr Avenatti represents three clients linked to assault allegations against the R&B musician, including a man who said he had worked with Kelly for years and knew the identity of the girl on the tape.

Mr Avenatti said the tape lasts 45 minutes.

CNN, which has viewed it, reported graphic details.

Mr Jim DeRogatis, who has been reporting on allegations against Kelly for years, wrote on Thursday in The New Yorker that the tape could lead to an indictment soon.

Mr DeRogatis was anonymously sent a 27-minute sex tape in 2002 and turned it over to the authorities.

Kelly was charged with child pornography and tried in 2008. Prosecutors alleged that the tape showed him sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl. But neither she nor her parents testified, and Kelly was acquitted on all 14 counts.

Recently, he has been under heightened scrutiny following the screening of Surviving R. Kelly, which examined years of allegations against the musician.

The six-part series featured interviews with women. In some cases, they said he held them against their will or initiated sex when they were underage. WASHINGTON POST

On social media



LOVE IS IN THE COOL AIR: It was a cool way to melt his heart. Prince Harry could not be with wife Meghan Markle on Valentine's Day because he was in Norway, visiting military folk taking part in Exercise Clockwork to learn to survive in extreme weather. The soldiers made it their mission to combat any heartache felt by the 34-year-old, reported Us Weekly.

Prince Harry, expecting his first child with Markle, 37, in April or May, was ushered into an igloo. The interior was plastered with photos of his marriage in May last year. "Love" was in the air, with the help of candles and music. "You weirdos," he said in jest. "It's very kind of you to invite me into your private shrine or whatever you want to call it. And the music, is that part of it? Romantic, isn't it?"

He also asked the soldiers if they had remembered to get flowers for their loved ones for Valentine's Day. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Toh Wen Li
Journalist
The Straits Times

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life

MOTORING

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Evo revamped
D12&13

ELECTRIC CAR PUSH
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to come?
D17



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Christopher Tan susses out the appeal of Toyota's new Camry.
D14&15

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Audi A4 2.0 TFSI	fuel consumption: 5.2l/100km	VES banding: B
Audi A5 Sportback 2.0 TFSI	fuel consumption: 5.6l/100km	VES banding: B
Audi Q2 1.0 TFSI	fuel consumption: 5.2l/100km	VES banding: C1

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Easy evolution

Lamborghini's Huracan Evo has been made easier for non-expert drivers to enjoy

Andre Lam
In Manama, Bahrain

Cynics may say the Lamborghini Huracan Evo is a mere refresh of a car launched in 2014. That is technically true, but there is a lot more to the Evo than what meets the eye.

Externally, the biggest change is a raised rear decklid spoiler which helps generate seven times more downforce than the standard Huracan.

In front, there is now a pronounced splitter below the spoiler to reduce drag and improve downforce.

Beyond aerodynamics, the Evo is an easier car to drive. Unleashing its 640hp engine – last seen in the Huracan Performante – is no longer as taxing as before. Instead of intervening after the fact, the car's electronic stability program is proactive – calculating what is needed and meting out countermeasures in an incredible 20 milliseconds.

It is, however, not overbearing, making corrections via torque vectoring, power delivery, damper settings and braking only when it suspects things are going awry.

Key to the Evo's enhanced drivability is rear-wheel steering, which Lamborghini first implemented on the Aventador S. It gives the Evo improved agility and steering sharpness without the need to use stiffer springs. It also confers greater stability at higher speeds.

The car's latest MagnaRide suspension has the quickest and most resolved damping of any Lamborgh-



ini. It has a wider range of damping forces as well as the ability to apply them in a way which keeps the car unruffled.

The Evo matches the Performante's 0-100kmh sprint time of 2.9 seconds. Both are said to be capable of breaching 325kmh.

Compared with the Performante, the Evo's throttle response is a bit less aggressive, making the drive experience more pleasant. Its sound-track however, is as exciting as the Performante's.

On the Bahrain International Circuit (a full-fledged F1 track), an expert driver led the test-drive through 12 hot laps.

Quite quickly, the car's LDVI (Lamborghini Dinamica Veicolo Integrata) stability system came to the fore. It is so slick and organic in its application that it feels as if it was not there at all.

Strada is the most pleasant drive mode, thanks to a relatively smooth dual-clutch transmission.

But it is unsuitable for track use. For that, Sport and Corsa modes are

better suited. Sport mode is the most fun but slower, while Corsa is a no-nonsense mode which requires manual gear shifting. In this mode, the stability system keeps the car sharp and as close to neutral as possible for a quick and neat lap time.

My personal preference is Sport, which allows for some drifting fun. Here, the LDVI is by no means infallible and the driver needs to have a modicum of experience at the wheel.

While it is always a good idea for owners to go for a skills upgrade, Lamborghini has now given the Huracan a more accessible performance envelope. As such, the car is a far more enjoyable drive than even the Performante.

It is due here in the third quarter of this year.

stlife@sph.com.sg

• The writer contributes to Torque, a motoring monthly published by SPH Magazines.



SPECS/LAMBORGHINI HURACAN EVO
Price: \$998,000 without COE
Engine: 5.204cc 40-valve V10
Transmission: Seven-speed dual-clutch with paddle shift
Power: 640hp at 8,000rpm
Torque: 600Nm at 6,500rpm
0-100kmh: 2.9 seconds
Top speed: Over 325kmh
Fuel consumption: 13.7 litres/100km
Agent: Lamborghini Singapore

The Lamborghini Huracan Evo has improved agility and steering sharpness, and greater stability at higher speeds. PHOTOS: LAMBORGHINI, TOM SALT

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Comfy Camry

Toyota's latest executive sedan improves on its excellent ride experience

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

There are cars which inspire a fierce and loyal following. The Toyota Camry, which turns 40 this year, is one such car.

While similar sedans from Honda and Nissan have left the scene here, the Camry is still having its day in the sun – relatively unscathed by the SUV tsunami.

It is even more amazing if you consider the executive model from Toyota is merely 15 per cent or so less expensive than a Mercedes-Benz C-class (yes, a smaller car overall, but it has the undeniable allure of a three-pointed star).

From its unveiling at the Singapore Motorshow last month, the new Camry has garnered more than 100 buyers. That accounts for the entire allocation authorised agent Borneo Motors has for the first quarter.

Looking at the latest model, it is not all that difficult to understand the hold the car has on its audience.

The car is built on a new global platform, one which the exquisite Lexus ES shares. And like the ES, the latest Camry sports a sleek and dynamic styling – a departure from its long, conservative stance.

Slim lights front and back, a prominent grooved grille, which extends down to where the front bumper is, and a soft wedge-shaped profile give the car a more youthful look.

The theme extends to the cabin, where the centre console is cradled in a chrome frame which folds like a kimono collar – going from right to left as it flows down to join the shift



gate. Again, this is a departure from the strict symmetry seen in previous interior forms.

Unlike in the Toyota RAV4, a proper touchscreen infotainment monitor takes pride of place within the "kimono collar".

The big car is equally big on features. The 2.5-litre variant has adaptive cruise control, lane departure

warning, pre-collision system and automatic high beam. It also has memory front seats, with the driver getting lumbar support as well.

These are in addition to features which the 2-litre has, such as electric parking brake with auto-hold function, rain-sensing wipers and rear air-con.

The Camry has always excelled in

ride comfort, but the new one takes it half a notch higher. The chassis seems to be controlled by a magical self-levelling device (there is none, just good suspension) and the car remains on even keel even when steered swiftly round a bend.

And it sails over road humps almost like they're not there. Despite its size, it turns neatly

and accurately, with less tendency to stray into another lane than many others of its stature and requiring less correction than most.

The car is adequately brisk, but not without generous throttle input. The cabin is well insulated against vibration and harshness, but engine note beyond 3,000rpm permeates

(in a not unpleasant manner).

Space-wise, the Camry is peerless in its segment, with plenty of room for both people and luggage.

Yet, there are a few things which are less than sterling. Its adaptive cruise control cuts off at speeds below 40kmh, forcing you to take over braking control. Its accelerator pedal releases with an audible

ping, marring refinement. And when you open the driver's door, all others remain locked. The car averages 9.5 litres/100km.

Ignore these and you have a Camry which is better equipped than the last one, and yet priced almost identically.

christan@sph.com.sg



Slim lights, a prominent grooved grille and a soft wedge-shaped profile give the new Camry a more youthful look. Inside, the centre console (above) is cradled in a chrome frame which folds like a kimono collar. In the boot (right), there is plenty of room for luggage.

ST PHOTOS
MARK CHEONG



SPECS / TOYOTA CAMRY 2.5
Price: From \$151,988 with COE
Engine: 2,487cc 16-valve inline-4
Transmission: Eight-speed automatic with paddle shift
Power: 206bhp at 6,600rpm
Torque: 250Nm at 5,000rpm
0-100kmh: 9.2 seconds
Top speed: 210kmh
Fuel consumption: 6.5 litres/100km
Agent: Borneo Motors

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The Renault Grand Scenic Bose (left) comes with the Head-up Display (above), which helps the driver to keep his speed in check without taking his eyes off the road.

ST PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG

SPECS / RENAULT GRAND SCENIC BOSE	
Price:	\$123,999 with COE
Engine:	1.461cc 8-valve inline-4 turbodiesel
Transmission:	Seven-speed dual-clutch with manual select
Power:	110bhp at 4,000rpm
Torque:	260Nm at 1,750rpm
0-100kmh:	13.2 seconds
Top speed:	184kmh
Fuel consumption:	4 litres/100km
Agent:	Wearnes Automotive

Sound investment

Renault fits its seven-seat Grand Scenic with a premium Bose hi-fi and more

Chong Jun Liang

How does a multi-purpose vehicle from a French brand compete against a sea of sport utility vehicles from Germany and Japan?

Simple – with loads of features. That, in a line, is what the Renault Grand Scenic Bose does. Introduced two years after the latest Grand Scenic was launched, the car now comes with LED headlights and new 20-inch wheels.

It also has drive-mode selection. Called Multi-Sense, it is activated via a large multimedia screen and offers five driving modes, including Eco, which comes with a gentler

throttle and milder air-conditioning.

Comfort and Neutral modes are the default choices for a fuss-free and sensible ride while Perso allows you to mix and match steering and powertrain characteristics from the other modes.

Family men can relive their boy-racer days in Sport mode. The steering tightens and both the engine and gearbox become more responsive to endow the seven-seater with a more exhilarating drive.

And this is where the Head-up Display comes in handy, helping daddy to keep the speed in check without taking his eyes off the road.

Front seats come with massage

function. While no replacement for the Osim chair, this feature will go some way in making long road trips more comfortable.

The addition which gives the model its name is a Bose premium sound system, featuring 11 speakers, one subwoofer and a specially configured digital amplifier. It is on a par with the systems in some luxury models.

Another noteworthy upgrade is a self-parking system, which can handle diagonal, parallel and perpendicular parking. The driver still maintains control of the brake and throttle pedals though.

The car packs the same 1.5-litre turbodiesel and seven-speed dual-

clutch gearbox as in the 2017 model. Still, the Grand Scenic Bose delivers a smooth and quiet ride even when the people mover is packed with seven adults.

Its third row, however, is still best reserved for petite individuals.

But the car is not short on storage capacity. There are no fewer than 13 storage spaces throughout the cabin.

A fuel economy of 7.2 litres/100km was achieved with a mix of highway and city driving. This is noticeably higher than Renault's stated 4 litres/100km, but the test-drive was done mostly with the Sport mode engaged.

Priced at about \$124,000, the Grand Scenic Bose costs some

\$4,000 more than the capable Toyota Prius+ hybrid seven-seater. Even though the Japanese rival packs a bigger 1.8-litre engine, the Grand Scenic Bose boasts superior horsepower of 110bhp and an even more impressive torque of 260Nm.

The Renault attracts a higher road tax because of its diesel engine, but this is partially offset by the lower cost of diesel at the pumps.

The Toyota has a better reputation for reliability, while the Renault looks decidedly more stylish and packs more features. Which car to buy depends on what premium you place on the strengths of each.

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SEAT Leon CUPRA 2.0 TSI / Fuel Consumption 6.6/100km / VES Band C1 • SEAT Toledo 1.4 TSI / Fuel Consumption 4.9/100km / VES Band A2 • SEAT Arona 1.0 EcoTSI / Fuel Consumption 5.0/100km / VES Band A2
SEAT Ateca 1.4 TSI / Fuel Consumption 6.3/100km / VES Band B • SEAT Alhambra 1.4 TSI / Fuel Consumption 6.7/100km / VES Band C1.

Will electric cars be more affordable?

There is talk in the motor industry that road tax levied on battery-powered cars will be reviewed

Christopher Tan
Senior Correspondent

Electric cars may soon receive a jolt which will make them more viable against less expensive combustion-engined models.

Up till now, electric cars – whether fully battery-powered or plug-in hybrids – make up less than 0.2 per cent of the total car population, with more than half belonging to an electric car-sharing company. This is despite long-standing tax rebates which partially offset the cost of owning such cars.

But that is expected to change soon. There is talk in the motor industry that road tax levied on battery-powered cars, currently deemed punitive, will be reviewed.

Responding to queries from The Straits Times, the Land Transport Authority said: “As technology evolves, the Government will continue to review its strategies and

regulations on a regular basis to achieve a cleaner and greener land transport system.”

The LTA noted that encouraging “the adoption of greener vehicles” is part of its strategy to address emissions from the land transport sector.

It added that road tax for electric cars includes “an element of progressivity” based on maximum motor power.

Motor industry players, however, said the sums do not work out well for electric vehicles (EVs).

For instance, the road tax on a Tesla Model S (P85) is \$6,202, almost equivalent to what a 6-litre petrol car attracts.

The power the Model S produces is about what a Porsche 911 Carrera S makes. Yet its road tax is nearly treble that of the Porsche’s.

Mr Vincent Ng, sales manager of Hyundai agent Komoco, which has two electric models in its line-up, said: “With all the news of an expanding infrastructure, we hope there will be more incentives to make electric vehicles more affordable to consumers.

“Due to the high cost of the EV battery, the cost of an electric vehicle is considerably higher than a combustion engine vehicle.

“We also hope that road tax can be rationalised.”



The Hyundai Ioniq Electric is one of the electric cars available in Singapore. PHOTO: ST FILE

He pointed out that the compact Hyundai Kona Electric with a 150kW motor has an annual road tax of \$2,246 – almost equivalent to that of a 3-litre petrol car.

But Wearnes Automotive, which has Renault and Jaguar electric models in its line-up, said high road tax is not the main hurdle for con-

sumers who are considering an electric car.

“Some of the challenges facing the adoption of EVs in Singapore are the availability of public charging and restrictions around the installation of chargers for customers who live in condominiums,” said Ms Corinne Chua, Wearnes’ general

manager for Jaguar Land Rover.

Wearnes pointed out that its sub-compact electric Zoe will still save an owner more than \$2,200 a year, with lower running cost offsetting the higher road tax. The Zoe, however, costs at least \$40,000 more than a slightly bigger hatchback like the 1-litre Suzuki Swift.

Electric vehicle advocates said tax policies for battery-powered cars should consider the health benefits they bring.

Mr Goh Chee Kiong, head of strategic development at SP Group, said: “Electric vehicles help reduce tailpipe emissions and noise. The cost to manufacture, operate and maintain EVs is considerably lower than conventional vehicles.

“Adopting EVs will bring about a higher quality of life for Singapore. To support this progress, SP Group is building 1,000 high-speed charging points by 2020.”

But Singapore University of Social Sciences transport economist Walter Theseira said: “Singapore has no need to be ahead of the curve when it comes to private EV adoption. This is because of the significant cost of building a charging infrastructure and the real risk that the infrastructure would become obsolete.

“However, when it comes to public use vehicles, I think there is a case to be made for adoption because the infrastructure can be utilised more efficiently.”

On this front, Ms Chua of Wearnes said: “Currently, there are no rebates for purchasing greener electric commercial vehicles.”

christan@sph.com.sg

TorqueShop

The brake warning light on my seven-year-old Mercedes-Benz C-class came on earlier today. I decided not to drive the car. I later found out that it was because of low brake fluid. What is the cause?

You did the right thing by not using

the car. Any issue with braking should be treated as critical.

A low brake fluid level in the worst case could be caused by a leak somewhere in the brake piping. A small leak is not something that is obvious enough to be seen on the ground where you park.

However, even the smallest leak becomes a gushing aperture when pressure builds up every time you apply the brakes.

Within seconds, brake fluid pressure can drop to zero. That fortunately is not something that happens often these days. Modern braking systems use separate lines either diagonally or front and rear so that a leak in one line will not cause a catastrophic failure.

Nonetheless, brake pedal travel will increase, while braking effect will be drastically reduced. If you have been experiencing poor braking

performance, then you should have the car towed to a workshop.

The most common cause of low brake fluid level is worn brake pads. When the pads thin out after prolonged use, more fluid is required in the brake callipers’ piston chambers to maintain the pads in contact with the disc.

Naturally, that will result in a drop in brake fluid level. Once new, thicker pads are installed, the

piston will be pushed back into the chamber, forcing fluid to return to the reservoir and hence restoring normal fluid level.

If the brakes work normally, the warning signal suggests that the pads need to be replaced.

Hydraulic brake fluid does not dissipate otherwise and, as such, does not require topping up.

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FastLane



Audi's next e-tron

This is a rendering of Audi's new electric car – the Q4 e-tron (above), which will be showcased at the Geneva Motor Show next month. Audi does not say much about the car, except that it will reach showrooms late next year or in early 2021.

Size-wise, it is likely to sit between the current Q3 and Q5 models, with sleeker styling afforded by the compactness of an electric drivetrain (like in the Jaguar I-Pace).

New engine for Range Rover Sport

Turbocharging, supercharging and a mild hybrid system. That sums up the Range Rover Sport (right), which is powered by a new 3-litre 400hp inline-six petrol engine. With 550Nm of torque, it powers the behemoth to 100kmh in 6.2 seconds and a top speed of 225kmh. The engine is forced-fed by a twin-scroll turbocharger supported by an electric supercharger. The drivetrain incorporates a 48-volt electrical system which can recover energy that otherwise would have been lost in braking.



Mitsubishi's 2020 ASX

Mitsubishi Motors will unveil its 2020 ASX compact SUV (left) at the Geneva Motor Show next month.

Since its launch in 2009, Mitsubishi has sold 1.32 million ASX units in about 90 countries.

The exterior design has undergone a major overhaul.

Engine choices include a 2-litre 16-valve engine equipped with either a five-speed manual transmission or a continuously variable transmission.

Both two- and four-wheel-drive versions are available.



Fastest Mini

Mini's new John Cooper Works GP (left), due next year, will have more than 300hp churned out by a four-cylinder engine. Production is limited to 3,000 units worldwide.

It is slated to be the fastest and most powerful street-legal Mini.

With large front and rear aprons, a striking roof spoiler and extensive use of lightweight materials, the design study picked up where the previous two John Cooper Works GP production models left off.

Moovit offers comprehensive transit options

Mobility app provider Moovit, navigation specialist TomTom and Microsoft's Azure Maps have come up with a solution to reduce congestion in cities.

The product identifies all of the driving, parking and public transit options, and surfaces them in a single package for map users.

This will be particularly useful for suburbanites who don't know where to park their cars or which transit line to take in lieu of driving into the city.

The solution, which is powered by Moovit's Transit application programming interfaces (APIs) with driving and parking information using TomTom's APIs, shows the options for driving a car from a suburb to a parking lot near a transit station, riding the transit into the city and completing the journey on transit, on foot, via car-sharing or on a scooter or bike.



Skoda's electric coupe-crossover

Skoda has shown first sketches of its electric coupe-crossover (left). Part of 10 electric models to be rolled out by 2022, the Vision iV concept combines an athletic body, 22-inch aerodynamically optimised wheels and powerfully flared mudguards with a pronounced coupe-like roofline.

Cameras, whose housings are visually reminiscent of sharks' fins, take the place of traditional exterior mirrors.

PHOTOS: AUDI, EVOLUTION, LAND ROVER, MINI, MITSUBISHI, SKODA

UN regulation on emergency brakes drafted

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe says about 40 countries have agreed to a draft UN regulation for Advanced Emergency Braking Systems (AEBS) in cars, Agence France-Presse reported.

Using sensors, such systems monitor the proximity of a vehicle or pedestrian in front of a car. In situations where the sensors indicate a collision is imminent and the driver does not react to the system's warning alert, emergency braking is automatically applied to avoid a crash. Such systems have been in use for a number of years in trucks and buses.

The new UN regulation would impose strict and internationally harmonised requirements for the use of AEBS at speeds up to 60kmh.



Jaguar's modern-day comforts with 1960s design

Jaguar E-Type restorer Evolution will soon unveil a brand-new aluminium-bodied E-Type Roadster (left). The car will offer modern-day comforts, handling and reliability packaged in an iconic 1960s design.

Book a vehicle any time, anywhere with Vulgo

Vulgo, a global leader in shared mobility technology, is releasing a major upgrade which will make car-sharing more appealing. Its AiMA platform, which powers 25 car-share schemes in cities on five continents, will now support the flexibility of a free-floating scheme, in which users can access vehicles anywhere within a large geofenced area. Users can book a vehicle any time and anywhere.

Christopher Tan

GM, Amazon discuss deal with electric pickup-maker

David Welch, Spencer Soper and Keith Naughton

General Motors (GM) and Amazon are in talks about investing in electric-vehicle-maker Rivian Automotive in a deal valuing the start-up at US\$1 billion (S\$1.36 billion) to US\$2 billion, said people familiar with the matter.

The Plymouth, Michigan-based start-up is working on an electric pickup and sport utility vehicle (SUV), and debuted concept versions at the Los Angeles Auto Show in November.

Trucks and SUVs are gas-guzzling cash cows for Detroit car-makers. An investment in Rivian could help GM get an electric pickup to market faster and help ward off upstarts such as Tesla.

For Amazon, investing in Rivian would signal an ambition to shift a portion of the massive vehicle fleet that delivers its packages to zero-emission vehicles.

"Rivian is being cast in the same light as Tesla, a start-up that's outside the inner circle of the auto industry and that's appealing to GM," said Mr Jeff Schuster, senior vice-

president of forecasting at researcher LMC Automotive.

"GM could clearly do an electric pickup itself – it has the technology and a strong base of pickup buyers. But they don't have Rivian's image and separation."

GM has dropped hints that a plug-in pickup could be a possibility. When asked at an investor conference last month whether the company will sell one, CEO Mary Barra replied to an analyst: "You'll have to stay tuned."

"We admire Rivian's contribution to a future of zero emissions and an all-electric future," GM spokesman Pat Morrissey said in a statement.

Representatives for Amazon and Rivian declined to comment.

Like Tesla, Rivian acquired a vehicle assembly plant for a bargain from an established car-maker. It bought a factory in Illinois for US\$16 million from Mitsubishi Motors in early 2017.

Tesla builds its electric cars at a facility shuttered by Toyota, after GM pulled out of a joint manufacturing venture as part of its 2009 bankruptcy.

Rivian executives have said their R1T electric pickup will be able to

reach 96kmh in three seconds and tow 4,990kg. Deliveries are expected to start next year.

Parcel delivery is an ideal use for electric cars, as the vehicles can begin and end trips at designated charging points and take anxiety over battery range out of the equation.

Amazon is expanding its delivery capabilities through a network of independent contractors. Some drive their own vehicles, guided by an Amazon smartphone app. Others lease fleets of vans and hire teams of drivers.

"This gives Amazon the ability to jump into the automotive space," Mr Schuster said. "They're probably thinking of delivery applications. And this gives them a safe entry."

Amazon last year announced a delivery service partner programme that encouraged entrepreneurs around the country to start their own businesses by hiring drivers and leasing vans to make deliveries.

The company helps by securing discounts on van leases, insurance and other expenses and offers a steady stream of business.

In just a few months, Amazon had more than 100 new businesses



Rivian's CEO R.J. Scaringe introduced his company's R1T all-electric pickup truck at the Los Angeles Auto Show last year. PHOTO: REUTERS

around the country making deliveries on its behalf and continues to recruit for the partners' programme.

The rapid growth of Amazon's e-commerce business has put pressure on the company to expand capacity and reduce its reliance on its delivery partners that include United Parcel Service, FedEx and

the US Postal Service.

Betting on Rivian would be Amazon's second auto investment in short order.

The company was among the participants in a US\$530-million funding round that self-driving start-up Aurora Innovation announced this month. BLOOMBERG

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TACKLING SKILLS SHORTAGE LIKELY TO LEAD BUDGET DISCUSSION

By VIVIEN SHIAO

Pundits are widely expecting a fresh injection of support targeted at worker retraining and reskilling in the upcoming Singapore Budget 2019.

Recommendations of late include the extension of salary support schemes, enhancements to existing initiatives such as the Adapt and Grow initiative, and a top-up of SkillsFuture credits, to prepare the workforce for an increasingly digital future.

Some industry watchers are also not writing off the possibility of the easing of manpower quotas in emerging deep tech areas on the back of Singapore's ambitions to be a Smart Nation.

UOB economist Barnabas Gan said: "The move to promote skills related to technology such as artificial intelligence, big data and robotics

will likely be emphasised in the coming Budget.

In order to emphasise the adoption of such technologies, there will be a demand for certain skillsets and the Government may revise their foreign worker quotas to meet this changing industry demand."

Mr Ho Meng Kit, CEO of the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), said it would be "useful" if the quotas for skilled labour in certain sectors that are currently lacking in Singapore can be increased.

This could help ease the problem of skills matching that businesses currently face, he said.

"For example, we have heard feedback that companies need skilled IT specialists to help them digitalise," he noted. "There is a short window for this as we want to push our companies to digitalise quickly."

The Government has taken steps in this area, such as through the Capability Transfer Programme – first announced in October 2017 – to provide funding support for overseas experts to transfer skills and knowledge to local employees.

In a report by Maybank Kim Eng, economists Chua Hak Bin and Lee Ju Ye wrote: "We would like to see some targeted relaxation of foreign manpower or immigration policies given the acute labour market tightness and cost pressures in certain segments."

But DBS senior economist Irvin Seah suggested that existing guidelines pertaining to skilled foreign workers could be tightened through an upward adjustment in the minimum salary requirements for employment pass – currently at \$3,600 – and more stringent requirements beyond the Jobs Bank under the Fair Consideration Framework, which requires companies to advertise job openings on the Jobs Bank before submitting Employment Pass applications.

Even with the various schemes already in place to support the retooling of workers, observers say that there is greater urgency now to tackle this issue as Singapore grapples with an ageing population and waning labour productivity.

This could mean more training grants to upgrade skills and additional resources directed at job matching could be announced during Budget 2019.

A top-up of SkillsFuture credit is also due, while enhancements to the Professional Conversion Programme (PCP) and the Adapt and Grow initiative are also likely in the pipeline.

As of last count on Oct 3 last year, 370,000 Singaporeans out of the 2.6 million eligible for SkillsFuture credits have used it to attend training courses.

The Adapt and Grow Initiative was rolled out last year by Workforce Singapore (WSG) to help the Singaporean workforce transit into new job roles in growth sectors.

About 30,000 jobseekers were placed into new jobs in 2018, up from 25,000 placed in 2017.

One of the programmes under WSG's Adapt and Grow initiative is the PCP, which targets mid-career PMETs to undergo skills conversion.

Mr Lee Tiong Heng, Global Investment & Innovation Incentives Tax Leader, Deloitte Southeast Asia suggested that the Government could consider introducing a "scaled-down version" of the Productivity and Innovation Credit (PIC) scheme, where businesses could be entitled to 200 per cent tax deductions on amounts spent on training to further support SMEs to send workers for training.

But with the Government likely to announce new training incentives in the upcoming Budget 2019, observers raised concerns that this would lead to more issues.

Industry watchers say that policymakers should focus on making the current schemes more accessible for businesses instead of creating new ones.

Mr Ho of the SBF noted that while there are many schemes out there, companies struggle to identify the most suitable ones to meet their needs.

More awareness of the various initiatives out there is needed, he said.

One of the SBF SME Committee's recommendations for Budget 2019 calls for the development of "info-maps" of the government support schemes and grants to better help SMEs understand and leverage on the assistance available to transform and grow, he added.

Deloitte's Mr Lee proposed that more can also be done to ease the administrative burden for SMEs to apply for grants.

Aside from worker training, observers noted that more help should be given to companies to boost HR capabilities and plan further ahead for their manpower needs.

Mr Martijn Schouten, Singapore People & Organisation Leader, PwC South East Asia Consulting, said: "Despite best intentions, we notice that many organisations, even large and mature ones, don't know how to approach upskilling. They are unable to leverage analytics and technology to predict which roles will be made redundant in the near future, what people in those roles could do in the future and how these people can be upskilled in the right way."

He said: "Organisations can no longer afford to sit back and wait for society to produce the skilled talent they need to take the lead on reskilling. Organisations cannot necessarily protect jobs, but they can try their best to protect their people."

This is an excerpt of an article that appeared in The Business Times on Feb 11, 2019.

W Adapt & Grow

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Ms Lui is training the next generation of early childhood education to help children become confident learners.
PHOTO: TED CHEN

Climbing up the ranks
MY World Preschool deputy principal Annette Lui is rising to challenges that come her way

BY NIVANI ELANGO VAN

When Ms Annette Lui first joined the early childhood industry in 2013 as an apprentice, her main responsibilities included assisting the main teacher in the classroom. Today, the 28-year-old is the deputy principal at MY World Preschool, just one year after being vice-principal. Ms Lui credits her rapid rise to a leadership position to her principal Ms Kar Hwee's mentoring. She explains: "I built my confidence with support from her. I've gained a good understanding of leadership expectations and slowly extended my leadership role."

Mum's the word
She chose this career because it dovetailed with her desire to learn how to be a better mum to her son, now aged seven. She has two other children, aged five and three.

She explains: "I wanted to better understand how children develop mentally, and how to educate them." Becoming a mother at the relatively young age of 21 in 2012, she made sure, with the support of her husband, that she could strike a balance between work, family and personal interests, such as going on road trips and hikes, and socialising with friends. Ms Lui was also able to juggle growing a family with her own education. She trained in early childhood care and education in Teaching at the Asian International College for one and a half years until May 2015, when she was expecting her second child. While pregnant with her third child, she proceeded to obtain a specialist diploma in early childhood education — Leadership at early childhood professionals training centre the SEED Institute, finishing in November 2016.

Looking ahead
Her typical workday involves collaborating with her team on tasks such as planning meaningful activities for the children, and discussing ideas for classroom environment set-ups. As deputy principal, Ms Lui is nurturing the next generation of early childhood educators. She puts her training to good use by empowering her educators with ample space to move around the classroom, developing activities to help children grow in confidence and perform better. And as she enters her sixth year of service, Ms Lui attributes her rewarding career to having a good relationship with her colleagues, work-life balance and a positive mental attitude. She adds: "I foresee a future full of possibilities and excitement. I am eager to see what I can achieve as deputy principal at MY World Preschool."

Sparking joy

For preschool teacher Mdm Mas Idah, each workday is a chance to feel inspired and fulfilled

BY MICHELLE BONG

She's been in service at PCF Sparkletots @ Punggol North Blk 174D for 15 years — and counting. She is a versatile teacher who double-hats to teach the Malay Language and English Language classes. And she has taught children from Nursery 2 till Kindergarten 2 levels.

Yet for Mdm Mas Idah, each day at the preschool is no less fun and enriching. The 44-year old, who has received the Outstanding Mother Tongue Language Teacher Award 2018 in the merit category so far, says keeping things fresh is a matter of perspective.

How do you find joy at work on a daily basis?
"Many little things make me smile; for example, when the children respond to me with enthusiasm. Class dynamics are never the same; kids will say anything under the sun! As educators, we develop these responses into topics of discussion and learning opportunities. There are times when I get hugs from the children or they will ask me how I am. These actions warm my heart, especially when I am exhausted."

What enhances communication, culture and connection?
"Lessons that are as fun and engaging as possible! I firmly believe in providing authentic experiences for the children, while being mindful of their diverse learning levels and potential."



I prepare task cards and activities catering to different abilities, allowing children to develop at their own pace.

How is learning reinforced beyond the classroom?
"I plan activities, sourcing for field trip venues or suggesting relevant outdoor activities that match well with the themes taught in school. For example, to teach the kids about insects, I arranged for a trip to the Butterfly Park and Insect Kingdom in Sentosa. Despite logistical challenges such as manpower resources and the children's safety, such trips are a great opportunity to experience learning outside the classroom."

What's your secret to loving what you do?
"By seeing each day as a chance to further a learning journey that never stops. I have the support of my principal and colleagues, who share best practices. We always strive to give the best to the children, and we have ample opportunities to attend courses and workshops to upgrade our skills and teaching methods."

Mdm Mas Idah enjoying time with her young charges, helping them learn and grow through an activity.
PHOTO: TED CHEN

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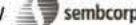
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An Electrical DC Power System Company in Singapore is Hiring

• Electrical Project Engineer

- Diploma in Electrical Engineering
- Knowledge in power and electrical systems
- Familiar with electrical device- UPS, Switchboard and Transformer
- 3-5 year relevant experience in electrical system
- Able to work independently with project management work
- Possess initiative & Good Communication skill
- Possess a class 3 driver's licence
- AutoCAD 2D & 3D is a plus
- Bilingual in English & Mandarin (to liaise with Mandarin speaking clients)
- Able to start work immediately @ AMK

- Send CV, recent photo and last 1 expected salary to admin@multipower.com.sg

The Periplus Publishing Group is a leading international book publisher with offices in the USA, Japan and Southeast Asia. We are seeking a qualified candidate for the position of:

SENIOR BOOK SALES EXECUTIVE

Duties include:

- Promoting new and backlist titles to bookstores
- Merchandising and conducting physical inventory checks
- Compiling weekly reports and orders from bookstores

Requirements include:

- Good command of English and Excel software skills
- Prior experience in the bookstore retail industry
- Good people skills with persistence to achieve goals

Please send your CV and current/expected salary to: hrs@periplus.com.sg

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